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THE SCOUT.

A ROMANCE OF EARLY NEW ENGLAND.

BY WARREN ST. JOHN.

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THE SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS.

IN a lovely vale, through which ran a stream of purest water the dash of whose tiny cascade refreshed the ear during the sultry days of summer, stood the village with which our story has to do. The settlement consisted of some thirty or more roughly yet comfortably built houses, while, on a rising knoll was situated that indispensable structure to all frontier towns at that period—the block-house.

It was the close of a beautiful day in spring. The full moon was just peeping from behind the tree-tops lining the summit of the mountain side, making the shadows assume a still darker hue, and throwing an uncertain light on the clearing around the village. A bright light gleamed from the windows of one of the cabins, somewhat larger than its fellows, standing apart from others. It was that of the principal man of the village. Toward this cabin a young man was making his way. At times he would walk with hurried strides, then would falter as if uncertain what course to pursue. He was on the point of retracing his steps, when his eye encountered the bright light beaming from the casement, and in its twinkle seemed to read a welcome greeting.

"My mind's made up to the fact that I'm a fool," he said, earnestly, as he again paused. "Here am I, more afraid to enter the squire's house than if it were a nest of Indians. Ever since I was a boy, I've been in and out, and always received an honest welcome; but now, because I intend asking him for Mary, I mope along like a booby afraid of the rod. Why should I hesitate? The worst that can befall me is a refusal. So the sooner I learn my fate the better." So saying the young man hastened forward to his fate.

Henry Atwood bore the name of being the mode. young

man of the settlement. Of a generous though impulsive temper, he possessed qualities of head and heart which commended him to all, old and young. Born on the frontier, he had been unable to embrace the advantages that others enjoyed, yet what he lacked in worldly accomplishments was fully made up by his naturally acute understanding, and by his unswerving honesty and goodness of heart. His powers as a hunter and forest-scout were conceded; though in this it will be found that his young years had not given him powers equal to those who had made it their life-long study to discover the trail and to study the cunning of their common foe. His face wore a frank and pleasing expression, and the broad chest, massive shoulders, and well-developed limbs, rendered him a fine specimen of the man fitted for the joys of home or for the dangers of the field.

The inmates of the cabin to which he was hastening were two—father and daughter. James Wilber was a native of England, which country he had left after the death of his wife; and bringing with him his infant child, he had found in the seclusion of the wilds of America not only a home but a solace for his grief. Being a man of superior mind, and withal possessed of that rare power which enables man to *command* his fellows, he at length became presiding genius of this delightful New England settlement.

Mary, his daughter, possessed the trusting nature of her mother, though when occasionally aroused by danger or trial, she was seen to possess much of the strong will of the father. In form, feature and manner she was a woman to love and be loved.

"Father, you seem weary," she said, smoothing the heavy hair, through which the hand of time had left its whitening touch.

"I do feel somewhat tired, my child," he answered, drawing her fondly to his knee and imprinting a kiss upon her cheek.

"Had you not better retire?" she inquired after a moment's pause. "It is late enough for the tired to seek their rest. Come, let me see that all is made fast, and then for a good-night kiss."

"Not yet, Mary I do not care to retire quite yet. I have

been thinking nard, Mary, and shall I tell you what, and of whom?"

"If you please, father."

"Of you, my child."

"And what was my dear father thinking of me?"

"Sit here, Mary, while I tell you," he replied, drawing a chair close to his side. "You know that, in due course of time, I shall be taken from you, and my desire now is to see you united to some man who will love and protect you as well as I have done, since the first moment your mother bequeathed you to me. I feel more anxiety upon the subject from the fact that the Indians, who, for many years, have been on friendly terms with us, have, of late, shown signs of open hostility; and it may so happen, that, in the discharge of the duties which I shall undoubtedly be called upon to perform, my days may be suddenly brought to an end."

He paused, expecting an answer from his daughter; but as she remained silent, he was on the point of resuming, when he was interrupted by a knock at the door. So accustomed had these frontiersmen become to act promptly when the slightest cause arose to warrant suspicion, that Wilber's first care was to reach up to his rifle and to narrowly inspect the priming. Assuring himself that it was ready for instant use, he proceeded to carefully unfasten the door. As it opened sufficiently to reveal the handsome face of Atwood, the troubled look of Mary was superseded by a blush, while the resolute bearing of her father vanished, as he shook the young man warmly by the hand, and bade him enter.

"Right glad to see you, Atwood, although I first looked to the priming before I unbarred the door," he said, as they seated themselves.

"There's nothing like caution, sir," replied Atwood, greeting Mary somewhat timidly. "Perhaps, before long, we may be called upon to use all our wits and arms too."

"Ah! have you been on a scout lately?" inquired Wilber, anxiously.

"Not exactly on a scout; but I was out for a few miles, when I fell in with a man who told me no very pleasant news."

"Who was he, and what did he report?"

"I don't know who he is. He is a genuine backwoodsman, and what he says can be set down as true. He didn't seem inclined to talk; but as we parted company, he remarked, that if we hadn't much powder and ball among us, it was time to get them. He likewise said that he would drop in to see us before many days."

"How long ago was this?"

"A little over a week."

"And are you confident he has not visited the village since?"

"He has not, I know."

"But why have you not apprised me of this before?"

"I have not been much at the village."

"Why not? You *used* to be well acquainted with the path leading hither."

"The fact is, sir, I—" he paused, colored deeply, and could not proceed.

"Well, well," rejoined Mr. Wilber, smiling, for he surmised the young man's secret. "Mary, may I ask you to step into the adjoining room for a short time? Atwood, here, seems to have something to communicate for my private hearing. Is it so, Atwood?"

The young man could not but feel relieved by Mr. Wilber's manner.

"Now, my boy, speak out," he resumed, as his daughter disappeared.

"Mr. Wilber," commenced the now reassured lover, "you know that Mary and I have grown up from childhood together, and you won't think it strange if, now that we are man and woman, we have learned to love each other."

"I don't think it at all strange. Few young men can see her without feeling some little of that emotion. But, is that all you have to tell me?" he asked, while a merry twinkle was observable in the corners of his eye.

"No, sir," answered Atwood, "I come to ask your permission to make her my wife."

"And this, I assure you, does not surprise me," said the father. "I must have been blind indeed had I not already been made aware of your love for Mary, and her preference for you. I was this evening speaking to her on this same

subject, Atwood," he continued, earnestly. "You have but a slight conception of the love I bear my child; and, in granting your request, I give the greatest treasure I possess. We are about entering on trying times. The Indians, I feel convinced, are massing their forces for a general attack, and it can not be hoped that our village will escape their notice. As I told Mary, should we be compelled to engage in bloodshed, I must be first to counsel and to lead, and God only knows but that I may be the first victim. Feeling thus, I did most earnestly wish to see her under the protection of a husband's arm. Remain here while I speak with her in private; then, Atwood, you shall both have my blessing."

He arose, and had gone but a few steps, when a second summons at the door caused him to pause.

"That was hardly a friendly knock," he remarked, as he retraced his steps.

"Let me see who it is," said the young man.

"No, you sit still. It is no Indian, at all events," was the reply, as the fastenings were undone, and the door opened.

The face that presented itself caused even the young hunter to start. It was that of a man, perhaps forty years of age, of an uncommonly stout and muscular build. He wore a dress, half savage, half civilized, while the weapons he carried at his belt were those used by the Indian warrior. The eye was black as night, and deep-set, seeming to read your very thoughts. His hair, of the same jetty hue, hung in short, stubborn curls about his forehead, on which were visibly traced the furrows of an evil nature. The remainder of his face was hidden by the heavy beard, which had been allowed to grow long and to become matted.

"Does a Mr. Wilber live here?" he asked, in a voice that seemed to issue from the depths of a cavern.

"I am that person. Will you walk in?"

"I can't stop long; for what business I have with you I can do quickly," he replied, as, entering the room, and seating himself, he allowed his long rifle to fall against his breast. Raising his eye, it fell upon the young man, whom he had not until that moment observed.

"What I've to say to you, I'd sooner say alone," he growled, turning to Wilber, and making a motion toward Atwood.

"There can be nothing so secret but that I would have my friend hear it. Let me know your wishes," said Mr. Wilber, resuming his chair.

"You forget me?"

"I most certainly do not recognize you."

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, while a truly fiendish expression passed over his face; "some men are apt to forget when they feel inclined to."

"You have no right to speak in this manner, whoever you are. I tell you again I have no recollection of having seen you before," said Mr. Wilber, sternly.

"Well, you must have a bad memory, then."

"You will have the goodness to tell me at once what your business is. I do not care to wait."

"I s'pose so. I overheard a word or two before coming in," motioning again toward Atwood, "and I'm in as much a hurry to go as you are to have me; so I'll talk out at once. Do you remember, long years ago, of your promise to a man who saved your life from an Indian who had mastered you, and was about sinking his tomahawk in your brain?"

"Yes."

"I am that man."

"You?"

"I have changed some since then?"

"Fearfully changed, and, I fear, for the worse."

"For the worse or better, it is nothing to you," replied the stranger, savagely. "I've come here to ask if you remember your promise, and not to hear your opinion as to how I look."

"If you are indeed that man, I will readily acknowledge the service you rendered, and redeem my promise by acceding to any request which it is in my power to grant."

"I have come to ask it now."

"Name your wishes."

The stranger rose, and going to Wilber, whispered a few words in his ear; then retreating a few paces, stood leaning on his rifle, waiting a reply.

For a moment the old man sat speechless in his chair; then he slowly rose to his feet, and fixing his eye steadily upon the man, said, firmly:

"It is beyond my power to grant it; but were it not, I should refuse you in scorn."

"Perhaps there are ways that can be used to compel a man to do as it don't exactly please him. I'm one of those kind of fellows that ain't used to being refused, and especially by any one indebted to me as you are; but, I'll give you chance to think the matter over till to-morrow night, when, if your answer is the same, beware!"

"Your threats and manner do not intimidate me. Ask me any righteous request and it shall be granted; but this that you have made known—never! You have received your answer."

"Then, for the future, have a care, for I *will* have what I asked, and perhaps more. The Indians are your enemies; but from this moment you have a foe more deadly than they." He moved toward the door.

"Stop!" commanded the young man, springing to his feet, his face gleaming with passion. "Stop till I say a word or two. I don't know who you are, and, what's more, I little care; yet there is one thing I do know, and that is, you're a scoundrel in looks and in words. Do you call it a brave action to threaten one who is almost too old to protect himself? Go back to your haunts—away from sight! If ever you show your face in our village again, I shall not answer for your safety."

"Did you ever, youngster, play a game of chance with such things as this?" was the reply, as, tapping the hilt of his long, keen knife, the stranger advanced toward Atwood.

"I have sent mine to the hilt in more than one bear, and it won't want quite as stout a blow to open the way to your dark breast," replied the young man, letting his hand fall unconsciously upon the handle of his own knife.

"Then if you think so, try it. Your hand's on the hilt; draw out the blade, and we shall soon see who is the most expert."

Forgetting every thing, Atwood drew his knife, and was upon the point of rushing upon the fellow, when the door, which had remained unfastened, was thrown violently open, and the next instant Atwood beheld the hunter whom he had met in the woods standing between himself and the ugly rascal.

"Wal, Mister, if you'd as lieve, I'll take the young man's place, kase, if your mind's made up to do a little cutting, jest try your hand on *this* human! I ain't over good-looking you see, so a mark or two more won't spile my beauty."

The stranger stood motionless, save that he let the uplifted hand which held the knife fall slowly to his side, while he fixed his eye, with a troubled look, upon the man who had so unexpectedly interposed.

The new-comer proved to be a person whom not even a warrior would attack without due deliberation. His build denoted great strength, while from his numerous scars, it was evident that he was no novice in the use of the weapon he wore. His dress consisted of that usually worn by those who lived in the forest, and watched over the safety of the numerous settlements. The most striking feature presenting itself was his eye, which was mild, even winning in its expression. The cap he wore was surmounted by the tail of the red fox, intended either for ornament or design. It was so arranged as to droop over to the left, effectually concealing the eye on the left side of his face.

"What on 'arth are you waiting for?" he asked, after having allowed the stranger to gaze upon him for some time; "If you're backward I'll commence." His knife gleamed in his strong hand.

"Who are you?" burst from the man's lips.

"Ye think you know me, do you? Wal, I ain't surprised, kase you and I've met more than once, Mr. John Outlaw and Indian Sagamore!"

The outlaw—for such he was—started. "Who are you?" he again asked, in a tone of visible trepidation.

"Wal, all I'll tell is, that I'm the last man you'd want to meet in the woods, if you hadn't a few of your red friends at hand. I've been on the hunt for you, John, and had almost made up my mind to put you out of the way when we met. You see that winder," he added, pointing opposite the door; "through that winder you might have seen a man bring a rifle to his shoulder more than once to-night, and its muzzle was on a line with your brain. I couldn't shoot you, howsoever, John, kase it was cowardly, and kase when my finger longed to pull the trigger, I thought of your lonesome daughter,

and it seemed as if I could see her sad face, and hear her voice asking me to spare her father. It's the last time I'll do it though; so mind in future how you travel, where you go, and who's about you. I don't know what's your business *here*, but I'll be hanged if it's for any good. You are an evil genius, so I've made up my mind it's time for you to go. John, that Indian you've got to meet will get tired waiting if you ain't soon starting."

So saying the hunter sheathed the knife, which, till then, he had held in his hand. Then going to the door, he opened it and stood waiting for his enemy to pass.

"So it's life and death between us, is it? Be it so; I am not the man to shun danger where the odds are even. I only leave this house because you outnumber me." Then fixing his fierce gaze upon his sturdy opponent, he added: "I shall leave a broad trail, and one easy to follow; dare you take it?"

"Reckon I'll think 'bout it, John," was the calm yet tantalizing reply. "'Twould be a pity to keep your red friends laying in ambush long, though the nights are warm; but you tell them to wait long enough, and they'll see me, *sure*."

These last words he shouted after the outlaw, who had left the house, and was already some distance out on the clearing. As the door closed, the hunter seated himself, and, removing his cap, for the first time betrayed the fact that he was deficient of his left eye.

"I am grateful to you for your timely arrival, else this young friend of mine might have paid the penalty of a quick temper with his life," remarked Wilber, extending his hand.

"Wal, squire, I reckon you may be glad," replied the visitor, returning the friendly grasp. "It ain't no child's play a man's got to do if he makes a quarrel with John."

"You seem to know him well."

"Reckon I do, *some*. He and I ain't over glad to see each other when we do meet."

"Who is he?"

"Nothing more or less, squire, than a white-skinned Injin."

"I feel interested in knowing all about him. If you don't object, I should like to hear the particulars of his history."

"Wal, so you shall; but let's get acquainted like, and then we can talk better."

"That will not require long. This young man's name is Atwood, and a brave lad he is. Yonder stands my daughter Mary, and I am called squire Wilber. Now who have we the pleasure of seeing?"

"Wal, squire, it ain't the easiest thing for me to tell who I am. Where I was born I don't know, and the only thing as I do know is, that I've been in the woods all my life fighting the Injins. You can call me Peter, the scout, to start on, and perhaps afore we've seen the last of each other, you'll know more 'bout me. Now what is it you want to know?"

"Of our troublesome visitor—who is he?" replied Mr Wilber.

"It's a long story, and I ain't much of a hand to put one together, yet I'll tell you enough about that chap, so as if you chance to meet him agin, you'll ask him out of the house. You heard me tell him that if it hadn't been for his daughter I'd been tempted to send him into t'other world this very night?"

"Yes."

"Wal, so I would, squire; but I ain't the man to forget favors, and I guess she did me one. You see, the ugly-looking rascal once lived in the settlements, and had a wife and this one child that I speak of. He warn't liked by any, but he didn't care for that, so that he was let to do pretty much as he'd a mind. He'd be gone sometimes for a month or more, and not even his wife or child could tell where he'd go to. Wal, squire, it turned out at last that he did something too bad to be overlooked, and he was brought up and punished. After he was let go agin, he hung around for some days, when off he started, taking his wife but leaving his daughter. Some two years after he came back alone, and from that day to this *she* ain't been heard of—his wife I mean."

"She died I suppose during those years. The wandering life he no doubt led must have been too much for the poor woman to endure," suggested Mr. Wilber.

"Yes, you're right—she did die," returned the scout, but in that peculiar tone which told that there was something to come.

"And do you know how?"

"He killed her."

"Killed her?" burst from the lips of the trio.

"I don't mean, folks, that he murdered her with his ~~own~~ hands, but he sold her to an Injin chief who took a fancy to her—the consarned varmint—for a good round sum of money, and she lived jest three weeks arter that. Now if that ain't jest as bad as if he had killed her himself, what on 'arth would you call it?"

"It certainly must have caused her death," remarked Mr. Wilber; "but how do you *know* this to be true?"

"Kase seein's believing, ain't it? and I saw the whole or it."

"Why then were you so reluctant to take the life of such a wretch?"

"Wal, squire, it's kase he's got a daughter, as I told you afore, who once saved my life, and for *her* sake I've let him go; but it's the last time! It ain't so much for what he did to his wife that makes me hunt him, but he's in with the reds, and you mark what I say, it warn't for no good that brought him here to-night. I tell you, folks, you're going to hear more from John afore long, and the next time he'll come about these parts it won't be alone. Now, squire, I've come down to give you a help, and those that know me wouldn't refuse that offer."

"Most gladly do we accept it," replied Wilber; "but won't you have something to eat?"

"Not afore morning, kase I've to take a look after John afore long; and as company wouldn't be bad, suppose you come along?" This last sentence was addressed to Atwood.

"Nothing would suit me better," he replied, then paused abruptly, as he recalled the errand which had yet produced no definite results.

"Well, well, Henry," said Wilber, noting the young man's anxious face, "I know why you hesitate; and, as the presence of our new friend need not cause us to defer our business your desire shall be gratified. Mary, my child," he said, rising and taking her hand, "Henry has to-night made known his love for you, and has asked my consent to make you his own. Shall I give it? Do you love him, my child, with the devotion due from a wife?"

The beautiful girl, scarcely recovered from the excitement

of the outlaw's visit, was silent. She only answered by the mute language of her eyes and suffused cheek.

The father continued:

"Atwood, in giving you this girl, I give you my all. Take her, and may your life of marriage bliss be long. God bless you both."

"And you have an old hunter's blessing along with the squire's, gal, if it's worth the taking," chimed in the scout. "And I'll be roasted to a crisp if it don't go hard with the man, red or white, that'll do you harm. You see, squire, when I see these love-scrapes, which ain't often, it makes me feel a little warm about the heart, though 'tain't ever come out, for I never saw the gal that ever took a fancy to *my* pretty face. Come, boy," he at length said, having, with native delicacy, stood apart from the lovers while they exchanged a few words, "if you're going with me, take leave of the gal, and then get your duds on, for we've some walking to do before sunrise."

The young man soon signified his readiness for the start. After a close examination of his piece, which example Atwood followed, the scout abruptly bade them good-night, and they left the house.

CHAPTER II.

RUTH.

THE settlement to which we have invited our reader's attention was located near the river Assabet, in the State of Massachusetts. Numerous small streams flowed into this river, and the appearance of the surrounding country was imposing. On the night in question, and upon the summit of one of the numerous cliffs lining the river's bank, tall and immovable in the light of that spring moon, stood the form of an Indian chief. Beneath his feet a little brook was hewing its path through the granite rock to the sea, and throwing the spray, as its waters dashed over the cataract, in sparkling drops up to the red-man's feet. He seemed part of the rock

on which he stood—so motionless was his figure. Yet he was not the less watchful. Every form revealed by the pale light, every rock, the faintest shiver of each leaf and limb were noted. He waited, but stood sentinel even as he waited. It was his nature to watch. The checkered moonlight, as it struggled through the open boughs, revealed the noble brow, the quick, intellectual eye, and the closely shaven head, with only the single lock remaining, reserved for him who, when the strife should be man to man, breast to breast, and knee to knee, would prove more mighty than he. The texture of his raiment was unusually fine, even for a chief. His gaudy and tasseled blanket was allowed to fall in graceful folds from his shoulders. Being open in front, it revealed his knife and tomahawk, the handles of which were inlaid with small particles of gold. They were strapped to his person by a broad belt of beaded wampum.

Such was Modocawan, chief of the Wampanoags.

As moment after moment glided by, he became restless, and, at length, throwing his rifle in the hollow of his arm, he paced the narrow ledge with hasty strides, muttering indistinctly to himself. An almost imperceptible rustling in the shrubbery on the opposite side of the ravine at length startled him. Springing, with a single bound, into the shadow of the thicket behind, he cocked his rifle, and again resumed his motionless attitude. The seeming cry of some night-bird was soon heard, when, uttering a grunt of satisfaction, he stepped out, and was joined by the outlaw.

"I'm behind time, Modocawan," the white man said, "but I couldn't help it."

"What kept my pale-face brother?" inquired the chief.

"In the first place, 'ef it's no short walk from here to yonder settlement, and, in the next, I met more than I went for, or that I wanted to see."

"But did my brother get what he wanted? Will the white dove consent to nestle in the same nest as the hawk?"

There was much of satire in the tone in which this question was asked.

"No," was the outlaw's almost savage answer.

"Why?"

"I can't say, chief, but he refused my request."

"Sagamore," said his companion, in a low tone, and using the title given to the outlaw by the Wampanoags, "have you lied to me, when you said that whatever you asked of him would surely be granted?"

"I did not. I only wish I had let the Indian kill him, ingrate that he is. Who do you think I met at his house?"

"Let my brother tell, and I shall then know."

The outlaw, as if fearful the night-breeze would waft his voice to some listening ear, stepped close to the chief, and whispered a name. The effect produced was electrical, for the voice of the Indian quivered with passion as he spoke:

"Why did you not drive your knife to his heart? or are you a coward, and only bold with your tongue? Has the Sagamore forgot how this is his, as well as the red-man's enemy? Does he forget his oath to kill him, no matter where they met? Ugh! you are a woman!"

"Not quite so fast, Modocawan," replied the outlaw, quietly, for although the taunting words of the Indian awoke his fiery nature, he held it in check, knowing that his future efforts would be entirely fruitless without the chieftain's aid. "Not quite so fast, I say. You shouldn't speak so, for you never knew me to show my back to an enemy when my chances of victory were equal. No, no, chief, it was not that I lacked the will, but, had I killed him, I would have paid the penalty with my own life, and so my ambitious plans would have ended. But you, or some of your young men, will have a chance of wearing his scalp at your belt before the sun rises, if it's worth a little trouble."

"Will my brother tell how this may be done?" calmly asked the chief.

"When I left the old man's house I invited him to follow my trail; and although he said 'he'd think about it,' the sun ain't surer to rise than that he won't be one hour behind me. I left a broad track until I struck the valley of this brook, when I took to the water, and I'd be willing to stake my life that he's no great way off at this moment."

The chieftain stood in thought some little time, then turned abruptly, and entered the forest. With rapid strides he proceeded onward some mile or more, when, halting as suddenly as he had started, he uttered a low whoop. This was at once

answered by five warriors, who immediately joined him. These grim tribesmen he addressed in too low a tone for even the outlaw to hear; the next moment they had started in the direction of the cliff. The outlaw waited patiently after their departure for the Indian to resume the conversation, but seeing he was not so inclined, he himself broke the silence.

"Does our compact hold good yet?" he inquired.

His answer was a grunt of assent.

"And you will give me all the assistance I require?"

Another grunt signified assent.

"Modocawan seems gloomy to-night. Has the chief some great trouble that ties his tongue?" he inquired.

"Modocawan is thinking," replied the Indian, looking up. "He remembers when the red-men roamed the entire forest with no one to stay his feet. He remembers when his heart was good, when no Owannux gave him to drink of the fire-water that maddened his brain and dimmed his eye. He remembers when he hunted and fought as the Great Spirit taught him, while now the pale-face has learned him to steal, to carry a crooked tongue, and to cheat. Why does the Indian let the white man live, and take, day by day, the land his father gave him. Sagamore, you pretend to be the red-man's friend, and to hate your own color. This is not natural; and yet the Indian calls you brother and trusts you. His eye is keen and his ear sharp; be careful, then, that you do not lie to him, for if you do your scalp shall hang here at Modocawan's belt. We are going to make war against your people, and we must know who we trust. You must bring your daughter and come live with my people, or go live with your own color, for you must be all one or the other. I have spoken. Does my brother hear?"

"Yes, chief, and will do as you wish," replied his companion, without hesitancy, startled though as he really was by the proposition. A fierce light burned in his eyes as he added: "I hate a white man, if I do happen to be one myself; and in future they would sooner have a dozen Indians after them than Outlaw John, as they call me."

"You have said well," replied the Indian, rising from the fallen tree on which he had seated himself, and, without even a good-night, he was soon lost to view.

"That's what I call making up your mind to leave, and doing it without waste of time," muttered the outlaw, as he retraced his steps toward the cliff; "but it's just like all he does. I tell you, Injin, it's all very well for you to think me your friend, but if I could make by it, I'd sell *your* scalp as quick as I'd show you where you could take a white man's life. I've only two aims in life now, and they are, first, to get the gal where I can have my own way with her, and next, to make all I can, no matter how. I don't like that new idea of the chief, though—having to turn Injin out and out, and Ruth in the bargain; but I've got to do it, and 'tain't no use worrying. There's another thing I don't like," he continued. "What's that scout doing in these parts? I thought him hundreds of miles away, and off my trail, when he's right on it, and just in the wrong time. I'll have to attend to his case, and if I—"

The sentence was cut short by the distant report of a rifle, accompanied by a wild screech, which the distant hills caught up and echoed one to the other. The outlaw started, and listened long and eagerly for its repetition, but, save the sighing of the wind, or the rustling of the new-born leaves, naught else was heard.

"Perhaps," he muttered, "that gun has done my work, and *he* is out of my way. But that cry!" He shuddered as he spoke of it. "It didn't sound human. I've heard the death-yell of many a man, but none like that, and, to tell the truth, I'd jest as lieve have company this minute as not."

Having lived so many years with the Indians, it was not to be wondered at that the outlaw had imbibed much of their superstitious nature. The shriek was so unexpected, so wild and unearthly in its note, as to chill his entire being, and, with rapid strides, he hurried homeward, eagerly noting the woods on every side. Reaching the cliff, he did not descend to the bed of the brook, but kept along its edge for over a quarter of a mile. At this point the stream made an abrupt bend, flowing directly toward the settlement. Here he crossed it, and, after walking in the water a short distance, left it, and struck off through the woods in a southwesterly course, until he emerged from a dense thicket of low brush and matted vines, upon a small clearing, in the center of which stood a

rudely-built cabin. From the window shone a dim light, causing the outlaw to approach with noiseless steps, and to look within. Seated upon a low stool, her head resting upon her hand, and her eyes closed in slumber, was his only child. Her age did not exceed sixteen summers, and so delicate, so beautiful was she, that it seemed impossible this repulsive-looking man could be her father. To still heighten the interest of her countenance, there was a look of intense sadness resting upon it, which stirred the very soul, and which plainly told the story of watching and weeping. She had awaited her father's return, night after night—for he had been from home some days—till, at length, tired nature had given out, and she slept at her post.

"Well, well, the child's up yet," he said, for the sight of her had touched what little better nature was left in him. "Ruth will never give over this folly until it kills her. How like her mother! Night after night I've seen her do the same thing, until it carried her off."

He started, unconsciously, as he uttered this falsehood touching the manner of his wife's death; then recovering himself, he uttered an oath, and seeking the door, knocked distinctly three times. The sound startled the girl from her repose at once, and the next moment he was admitted.

"You are up late, Ruth," was his greeting, as he entered.

"I could not sleep, father, till you came."

"But, you have been sleeping."

"I did forget myself for a short time; I was so tired."

"Then why did you not go to bed?"

"Because you were away."

"You should be used to that by this time, Ruth."

"I'm afraid I never shall, father. I fear the Indians. Should they come about and find me alone, I should be either killed or carried away."

"You will be neither one nor the other. The Injins and me are the best of friends, and my word for it, but they would as soon think of harming one of their own females as my pretty daughter."

"But, father, if you are obliged to be away so much, why can't I go to the settlement and stay until your return?" she asked.

"Because I'd sooner you stayed here. Has anybody been here since I left?"

"No."

"Well, Ruth, I shan't go away again for a long time. When I do go you shall go with me; so give me something to eat, and then we'll to bed."

The girl soon arranged the simple repast. Having satisfied his hunger, the outlaw pushed back from the rude table, bade his daughter see that the door was made secure, and without removing any of his clothes, threw himself upon the bed, and was soon buried in a sound slumber. The well-learned lessons taught by her mother forbade Ruth to retire, weary as she was, until every thing had been restored to its proper place. As she was more securely fastening the door and the heavy oaken shutters, she was startled by hearing her father utter a deep groan.

Hastily glancing toward the bed, she observed, by the workings of his countenance, that some secretly-guarded thoughts were troubling his mind. She stole toward the bed, in alarm. He partly raised himself, but again sunk upon his pillow, muttering, in detached sentences, words that filled the girl's heart with surprise and terror.

"Refused me, did he? I'll have her, though; she'll have to be the outlaw's wife in spite of all of them. Yes, yes, Mary Wilber, I'll bring you up to orest training, my little beauty. It won't be long before they attack the village, and then the red devils will have scalps enough. *She* must be safe with me first. Ruth won't like living with the Injins, but she's got to, that's all."

This much the girl distinctly heard; the remainder was spoken in a tone so low as not to be understood, yet she caught the words, "Mary," "Modocawan" and the "Scout."

"Now God help me!" she cried, as she tottered into her own apartment. "What is my father about doing? Can it be that all the terrible stories I have heard of him are true? Is he the man people say he is? Mary Wilber! I ought to know that name. Yes, I remember, now; she is the daughter of the squire at the settlement. He said the Indians intended attacking it, and it may be to-night or to-morrow. Why do I question myself and thus lose time, when duty is

plain? I will start at once, and be back long before he wakes. Oh, God!" she continued, throwing herself upon her knees, while a heavenly light shone in her face, "be with me. I need thy divine aid. Grant that I may be the instrument in thy hands of saving from the horrors of massacre and captivity my fellow-beings. Turn my father's heart from this great sin which he would commit."

She groaned in spirit, and wept bitterly for a few moments; then arose and seemed to renew her strength for that heavy experience which she felt, in her inmost soul, was in store for her. Throwing on a cloak made after the Indian fashion, to protect her from the night air, she softly unfastened a window, and leaped lightly to the ground.

Ruth Seaman was accustomed to extraordinary undertakings, as her life from childhood had been spent chiefly in the solitude of the wilderness. Yet her womanly nature shrunk from the future before her, and from the lonely night-tramp through the forest. Though she had seen many Indians at her father's cabin, and had often met them in her wanderings, her greatest fear, as she started forward, was of them. Putting her trust in Him who ruleth all things, she entered the woods.

The path, or, more properly speaking, the direction she took, was the route her father had pursued. The long strip of woods was passed, and the stream reached. This Ruth crossed; and, as she walked along its shore, she left the footprints of her feet clearly discernible even at night. A mile had been passed over in this way, when, to her terror, the sound of footsteps fell on her ear. Turning her startled gaze backward, the form of a savage, in the full glory of paint and plume, was seen rapidly approaching. The girl's first impulse was to flee; but a moment's thought convinced her how utterly foolish flight would be. She then determined to try what power there was in her father's name. Turning again with this intention, what can describe her feelings, when she saw the warrior halt and raise his gun as if in the act of firing. The earnest gestures of the girl prevailed, lowering his weapon he was soon by her side.

"Where pale-face go—where come from?" he asked, brokenly.

"I started for the settlement," said Ruth, scarce knowing what to say in reply, yet feeling it was best to speak the truth.

"What go dere for?"

"I wish to see some friends."

"What for no wait till sun come?"

"I must see them to-night; to-morrow won't do."

"What tell 'em when see 'em?"

Ruth could not have answered this question correctly without exposing the very thing of all others he must not know; she remained silent.

"No tell warrior, den no want warrior here. Pale-face squaw no friend to Injin!"

"My father is your friend, so I must be."

"Who fadder—what name?"

"He is called by your nation Sagamore John," answered Ruth.

"Ugh! know him long time—he good friend."

"Yes, I believe he is, and for his sake you will let his daughter go."

"Not dat way—go udder—go where trail lead to fadder, but no go dat way."

"I shan't be gone long; you may go with me if you like"

"No go self—no let you go udder. No good to Injin let you see and talk wid pale-face in settlement. Hab long tongue—say much in little while. You hear somet'ing 'bout Injin?" he asked, watching her closely.

"Oh yes. I've heard many things about you," she replied, evasively.

"What you hear?"

"Nothing except what father tells me."

"Fadder tell you come out to-night?"

"Oh no. He is soundly sleeping at home; but if you don't want me to go to the settlement I will return," said the girl, seeing it would be useless to attempt carrying out her design.

"Warrior take squaw wid him," he said, suddenly, after a short pause.

"Take me with you?" she exclaimed, drawing back in affright.

He simply nodded his head in reply.

"Where will you take me? Surely you won't harm one who never did you wrong?"

"Take um to chief—tell him where find um. Come!"

As he uttered this command, he turned abruptly, and with hasty strides commenced retracing his steps, not even deigning to glance behind to see if Ruth had obeyed him. With a choking sob, the poor girl started to follow, she knew not whither, and the twain were soon lost to view in the darkness of the woods.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE RIGHT TRAIL.

WHEN the scout, accompanied by Atwood, had proceeded as far as the outskirts of the clearing, they paused to arrange some plan of action. Both were well versed in Indian cunning, and were acquainted with the many tricks resorted to by their enemies to lead the whites into a snare, by which their lives could be easily taken without endangering their own. Of the two, however, the scout was by far the most shrewd and skillful in plan—a superiority which the vanity of Atwood was slow to concede.

"Wal, boy, now suppose we jest stop a bit, and see what's best to be done," remarked Peter, breaking the silence which had remained unbroken since leaving the house.

"I don't think it'll take long to do that," replied Atwood.

"You don't, eh?"

"Why no. You intend following that fellow, don't you?"

"Sartin."

"Then the only way we've got to do is to follow the track he's left."

"That's your opinion, is it?"

"Yes."

"S'pose you couldn't find where he's gone to any other way, eh?"

"No, nor you either."

"Wal, boy, I'm jest thinking I can."

"Nonsense."

"See here, youngster," commenced the scout, with a sprinkling of contempt in his voice, "you've been in the woods and have trailed Injins I believe, but you don't know how to work out the way a man goes by your head?"

"And I'd like to hear you tell how it's done?"

"It ain't often I lose time telling what's taken me all my life to l'arn, but as you are a nice sort of chap, and are going to marry that gal, I'll tell you. Which way's that straight ahead of us?" "North." "And that?" "West." "And that?" "East." "Now, which of them ways do *you* think he'd be likely to go?"

"I should think he'd be as likely to go toward the south as the north."

"And I think he wouldn't, so now I'll try and prove it. You see, boy, in the start he went toward the north?"

"Yes."

"Wal, if he'd wanted to go to the south, he wouldn't have come this way, and then round a mile or two to get there, when he could have jest cut across the clearing in one quarter of the time; and you see he didn't care to hide his trail *yet*, but afore he went far—you jest mind what I say—he'll fix it so that we can't find out where he went, and he'll take to water to do that. Now, boy, another thing is, there ain't no reds south or east of this, so he'll go to the north and west to find them. Ain't that kinder true head-work?"

"You are right, I must say."

"Then what's the use of our going round the way he did, when we can cut off a mile or more? Now, boy, you say I'm right in thinking he's gone to the north and west, and I'm jest as sure he's hid his trail before going far."

"If he's up to Indian dodges, I think he will myself."

"Wal, how's he going to do it?"

"By getting in water."

"Sartin. Now, how does that brook run?"

"From the north to the south, or pretty near that."

"Then I ain't going to take to the woods at all, and perhaps run into a nest of reds and lose some of my ha'r, but I'm going up that brook, and if you don't want to go that way jest follow his trail, and see if we don't meet at the same place,

only I'll be fresh for a long tramp, if we're in for one, and you'll feel like setting down a while."

"I must say that you reason about right, and I'll go your way. But when we meet him, or any of his Indian friends, what can we do against as many as he's likely to have about him?"

"I'll try *my powers*, then; but you ain't never heard of hem! Now let's be moving, kase we've lost too much time alking, and he'll get too far ahead."

Turning as he uttered this command, he moved on rapidly, until reaching the stream. Here he followed its banks, not caring to hide the broad trail he left.

It was Atwood's first lesson in yielding implicit obedience in such matters to the command of another. The simple, yet decided language of the scout, convinced him that he was not only a man confident in his own judgment, but also one not to be trifled with. Assured as he was that should he refuse to follow, Peter would certainly go on alone, he, without hesitancy, threw his rifle across his shoulder, and silently pressed forward. The little waterfall, whose noise could be heard at the village, was soon reached, but the scout, without stopping, led the way up the steep bank, and, after going some quarter of a mile further, suddenly paused. Motioning Atwood to do likewise, he said:

"Look here close, and tell me what you call this?"

Stooping, the young man distinctly traced the impression of a moccasined foot in the soft soil of the bank.

"Some person's been here lately, but whether 'twas that outlaw or the Indians I can't say," he replied.

"You ain't as good in the woods then as you thought you was."

"Why do you say so?" asked Atwood, somewhat angrily.

"Kase you don't know the difference between a white man's foot-marks and the pesky reds'."

"I know an Indian don't turn out his toes as we do, but that print's as straight as an Injin could make it."

"Pshaw," answered the scout, contemptuously. "I dcn't find out what kind of a human's here by his toes. Ther ain't any small boy but knows 'bout *that*!"

"Then what do you tell by?"

"You see, boy, that an Injin's all the time on the war-path. You can jest make up your mind it's all humbug 'bout their burying the hatchet and bringing out their pipe. You jest give them a chance to get a few white scalps, and it don't make one bit of difference whether they're at war or peace. The Great Spirit made them jest as they are, and a fish might as well try to live out of water as for one of them cut-throat without fighting. It ain't no use their trying to drive u whites out of this country, kase we're growing stronger every day, and they're getting weaker: but they're going to keep trying till there ain't one on 'em left."

"But what's that to do with this trail?" inquired Atwood.

"Wal, I reckon a good deal. This foot-mark's made deep, and that's why I know it warn't no Injin's. I said that they're always on the war-path, and you never saw a red, in the woods or out of them, with an enemy arter him or not, but steps light, and no warrior would tread here when he could have gone on that flat rock and left no mark to tell when he took the water. It's here, boy, where John's begun to hide his trail, and now you and I've got to keep our eyes and ears open. You take this side, kase it's the safest, and I'll take t'other. Push ahead!"

"What's the use of being careful now? Are not any Indians he might have had with him behind this spot?"

"Guess not," replied Peter, starting forward. "If there's any looking for us, we've got to meet 'em."

The manner of the scout was now entirely changed. Instead of the hurried and apparently careless manner used hitherto, one of extreme caution was adopted. Upon arriving at any of the numerous bends of the stream, a short halt was made until they were satisfied that no enemy was there secreted. Every foot of ground they passed over was closely inspected, but no trace was yet found as to where the outlaw had left the water. The banks on the side where Atwood stood were clothed by a thick growth of low bush, through which he labored to make his way. He had searched to within a few feet of its edge, and was on the point of stepping out into the broad moonlight, when he was checked by a hand laid on his shoulder. Turning, he found that the scout had gained his side with so little noise as not to have attracted his attention.

"Hush," was the quick, low whisper, as the young man was about speaking. "There's Injins just ahead, and we're in about as bad a place to meet them as we could find. I reckon it won't be long afore they'll come on down this brook; so let's you and I try and get out this nest of bushes afore they find us."

He accordingly began forcing his way from the stream toward that portion of the forest which was the most thickly wooded. They had scarcely reached the point aimed at, when a low hum of voices met their ear, and from what few words they could understand, it was evident their enemy had seen something to rouse their suspicion. Moving quickly on, until they reached a point where a huge rock towered its moss-grown summit far toward the sky, they climbed to its top, and throwing themselves upon their faces, waited whatever events might transpire. Between the outer edge of the woods and the growth of bushes was a clear spot, of some twelve or more feet broad, on which fell a flood of the moon's silver rays. On this Atwood observed that his companion's gaze was constantly fixed.

"They've found us out, boy," said the scout, in a whisper, as a whoop reached their ears.

"We're in for a fight, then?" replied the young man, with equal caution.

"Perhaps. But don't you use your gun till I tell you. We ain't in the best place, even here, 'specially as they outnumber us."

"We've no other choice but to fight or run. If you think the chances would be against us in a tussle, let's try a run while we've got some start."

"I never run from the cut-throats yet, till I wiped out one at least, and I ain't going to now. Jest you hold a bit, and see what I'll do. That's right," he added, as a loud yell burst from the Indians, "make all the noise you can, you red sarpents; I've heard you too often to be skeered. Now, boy, mind what I say, and even if I do shoot, don't you, or if you hear an un'arthly noise, don't think it ain't human."

By the noise and momentary glimpse of a dusky form, it was evident their foe had become thoroughly aroused, and were searching for their white victims. But a few minutes

elapsed when the bushes were pushed violently apart, and a warrior, with his body bent nearly double, in his eagerness to follow the trail, appeared upon the cleared spot. The scout, bringing his rifle in a position for instant use, uttered a low sound, yet sufficiently loud for the Indian to hear. The eye of the savage was at once directed to the rock, and he was on the point of uttering a triumphant shout, when the rifle was discharged. The Indian, staggering forward a few paces, turned, and fell with his back toward the rock. The report of the rifle had scarcely died away, when there arose a scream, so wild, so unearthly, that it sent a cold thrill of horror through the heart of Atwood. It seemed to issue close at hand, and yet there was this peculiarity about it: at a short distance one would have thought it came from some opposite point. Several of the dead man's friends were rushing to the spot, but, upon hearing the first note of that cry, they started to retrace their steps, and were seen ascending the opposite bank.

"For God's sake tell me if you know what that sound was?" asked Atwood, rising to his feet, and peering around him affrightedly.

"Nothing that's going to hurt you," replied the scout, after indulging in a dry laugh. "It ain't the first time I've skeered a man by *my* music."

"Do you mean to say you made that noise yourself?"

"Sartin I did. Reckon, boy, if it hadn't been for *that* noise, you nor I wouldn't have seen daylight agin."

"But the Injins—they—"

"Don't know what to make on it, and have gone to find out," interrupted his companion. "But let's be moving while we've a chance. It ain't no use to follow John any further to-night, kase there's too many of his friends about; so let's go back and take a little sleep afore morning."

Following the direction of the stream, they retraced their steps, keeping within the borders of the forest until the scout thought it would be safe to return to the valley. At the very point where they struck it Ruth had been overtaken by the Indian, and their footprints were soon discovered by the keen eye of the hunter.

"Wal," he exclaimed, "if here ain't something else to look at."

"What more have you found?" asked Atwood.

"Been some more humans along here since we were."

"Well, it won't be hard for you to tell who they were," replied Atwood, now thoroughly convinced of the superior sagacity of the scout.

"You're right, boy; I think I'll soon find out who they were. Now let's calculate. First, here's two tracks—a man's and either a boy's or a woman's. Now, it ain't hard telling who made that big one, but I'm puzzled 'bout t'other. Is any of the folks away from the settlement?"

"No."

"You're sure?"

"I know there isn't."

"Wal, there's somebody been trying to get there, that's Martin, and they've been in a hurry."

While thus conjecturing, he continued walking slowly along, until, at length, arriving at the spot where Ruth first noticed the Indian, he uttered, in a tone of satisfaction:

"It's clear as day now. There's been a white gal along here, and that Injin's been following her."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Kase it ain't likely a boy's been out this time o' night, and no boy ever made these marks."

"But what would *she* be doing here? Where do you suppose she's from?"

"I'm going to find that out, so jest *you* hide till I come back."

So saying, he disappeared up the trail. As minute after minute fled without bringing the scout's return, Atwood became more and more restless. He was several times upon the point of starting without longer delay, when the rustling of the leaves, or some distant sound, made him shrink quickly back. That startling cry he had heard was forever ringing in his ear. Although the scout had given him to understand that he was the author of it, yet the superstition so common among bordermen of that day, probably originating from their contact with the savage, gave him a feeling of dread which he found it impossible to overcome. He had, unconsciously, become less watchful, when the voice of the scout startled him from his reverie.

"You're a pretty Injin hunter, as you call yourself, to let a man sneak right on you without your hearing," exclaimed Peter, as he seated himself on a fallen tree.

"I was thinking," faltered Atwood.

"And I'm thinking all the time, but it don't hinder me from seeing or hearing. I tell you, boy, it won't be many days afore every man, woman and child will have to watch, if they think any thing of their lives. These woods are full of the reds, and there ain't one of them but's in his paint."

"You've seen more, then, since you left?"

"I ain't seen a live soul, but there ain't more deer-tracks on a run-way than there's moccasin-prints all about here."

"What did you find about that trail? Guess you've been some distance, judging the length of time you were gone."

"Wal, I shouldn't wonder but I had. And now let's be going, kase we ain't got one minute to lose. I followed on up the brook," he commenced, as they moved forward, "for over a mile, when the up track took to the woods on the right. I didn't hardly know for a while what to do, kase, you see, I wanted to l'arn more 'bout who made that little track. Wal, I didn't stand long thinking, for, after hunting about a little, I found where she'd come over the brook. It wasn't the easiest thing in the world to keep her trail through the woods, but I did it, and the fust thing I knew, out I comes on a bit of clearing, and in the center of it stood a cabin."

"Did you find anybody in it? I never heard of any one living in this region away from the settlement before," exclaimed Atwood, in astonishment.

"Guess you don't know all you ought to, then, kase some of your neighbors knew a gal that didn't live in the village."

"There has been a strange girl seen about several times, but we thought she was on a visit to some of our neighbors. But about the house?"

"That's jest what I'm coming at, if you'll stop talking. I went up to it without any noise, and when I tried the door, found it open, but there wasn't a soul inside. There was some ashes in the fire-place that was warm yet, and by the looks of the bed, and some other things that lay about, I jess made up my mind it hadn't been long since the owner left, and I'm thinking I know who he was."

"You do? Let's know."

"It wasn't no other than that dod-blasted white Injan, out-
law John, and that little track was made by his daughter."

"Strange; what could have brought her out?"

"Can't say sartin, but I kinder think she's found out some-
thing, and was coming to let you know. Now, boy, I'm
bound to see what that red-skin's took her with him for."

"Don't you suppose that the father, finding she had left
had started to find her?"

"Yes, you're right 'bout that; kase, if he hadn't, I'd have
found him to hum; but he didn't go to look for her, because
I'd have met him. That man ain't human. He don't love
his own child half as much as I've loved some of my dogs,
and I don't think he cares whether he sees her again or not.
He wasn't going to take the trouble to hunt her up when
there was so many of his red friends that would do it. You
see, boy, he knew she couldn't get down to the settlement
without falling in with some of these varmints he's set to
watch for me, so he's taken a short cut to see some chief and
wait till they bring Ruth in."

By this time the outskirts of the clearing was reached, and
hurrying across it, the two men entered the home of Mr.
Wilber, and quickly resigned themselves to the short slumber
which was allowed them before the day broke.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ANGEL AND THE FIEND.

THE Indian who had intercepted Ruth in her errand of
mercy was one of the most experienced warriors of his tribe
which was known as the Wampanoags. Had the scout
decided, when hesitating at the point where the double trail
entered the woods, to have followed it, he would have found
his best judgment and woodcraft taxed to the utmost. The
savage, after proceeding some distance from the creek, turned
and followed a course directly parallel with its flow, until,

arriving at a spot that seemed to suit his plan, he turned again directly toward it. Lifting Ruth in his strong arms, and bearing her as easily as if she were a child, he entered the water, and walked in the center of its bed until he came to the spot where the outlaw and chief had held their conference. Here, setting the frightened girl down, he bade her ascend the cliff, himself leading the way, and selecting a path where their footsteps would leave no impression. He well knew that, did he reach the spot where so many of his tribe had been, his trail would be lost in mingling with theirs, thus baffling pursuit.

"Pale-face tired?" he asked, when they had gained the summit.

"I am some tired, for you have walked very fast," replied the exhausted Ruth, gaining courage by this little act of humanity in the warrior.

"Why don't say yes or no? Injin don't know much English. He say what mean in little talk. Bad for warrior hab long tongue."

Ruth made no reply, and the silence remained for some time unbroken.

"T'ink friend come bum-by? Find trail—take squaw from warrior?" he asked again.

"I have no such hope. I have no friend but my father," replied the girl, for she wished to conceal, even from him, that she possessed one other friend.

"If got no friend 'mong pale-face, come live wid Injin. He take squaw in his wigwam—hunt for her—fight for her—be good Injin if she come."

Whether this was intended as an offer of his hand by her savage conductor, or only to test the real state of her feelings toward the red-men, it was impossible for her to determine. Without hesitation, she replied that she did not think the two people were intended to mate with each other, being too unlike in color, habits, government and civilization. Whether the warrior fully understood, or was convinced by this reasoning, she could not tell, for uttering his expressive grunt at the close of her remarks, and after allowing what he considered a sufficient time for rest, they once more resumed their journey.

On led the Indian, with rapid strides, while, unmurmuringly,

the poor girl strove to follow. Now their path would lead them by many a crook and turn through the crowded trees; again they would tread some mossy log, laid low by the ruthless hand of time, for no woodman's ax ever had stirred the echoes of those distant wilds. Her guide would assist, at times, in holding back the wild vines or brambles that choked her path, or carefully choose the more solid footing as they passed over many a quaking bog. The bright rays of the rising sun began to light the eastern sky, as they suddenly arrived in sight of a valley where lay, half concealed by mist and tree, the red-man's village. Ruth had never before seen one, yet she felt no curiosity; all she desired was to reach some place of rest. Cheered with the prospect that at last it was near at hand, she urged her weary feet on. In a short time they arrived at the village. Her guide led her, without pausing, through the outer circle of wigwams. Arriving near the center, he stopped, and beckoning several squaws toward him, addressed a few words to them in his native tongue; then, giving Ruth into their charge, he walked away. The tent or wigwam toward which she was conducted was much larger than the majority of those immediately about it. Its floor was covered with the skins of wild animals, which gave it an air of barbaric comfort. To the scarcely intelligible inquiries of the Indian girls, Ruth answered that all she required was rest, and she was at once left alone.

The sun was riding in mid-heaven when she awoke. Rising she opened the flap of the tent, and gazed out with curious eyes upon the different sights that presented themselves. Feeling no concern for her personal safety, she indulged her curiosity to its full extent. So interested had she become in the play of some Indian boys, engaged in a mock battle which they imitated with surprising correctness, that she failed to hear the approaching footfall, or note the form of her father until he spoke.

"Ruth."

She started and hurriedly turned.

"Oh, father, I am so glad you've come," she said, earnestly, going toward him, and looking up into his face with a glad smile. "I knew you would miss me and wouldn't rest till I was found."

"How is it, Ruth, that you're here?" he asked, sternly, an angry frown resting upon his repulsive face.

"I was brought here by an Indian scout," she replied, with some little hesitancy.

"Did he steal you from our cabin while I slept?"

"No, father."

"Then how came he to get you? Don't try to deceive me, for I know all about it, girl," he added, as his daughter remained silent. "What were you doing down by the brook? Going to the village?"

"I never tried to deceive you, father, and I never shall," she answered, boldly. "I *was* on my way to the village, and would to God I had reached it."

"What took you there?"

"To warn them of the Indians. To tell them that an attack was planned, and that unless they were watchful and well prepared they would all be killed."

"And pray who told you all about this?"

"You, father."

"Me! Now that's a lie, girl, for I don't know any thing 'bout it, so I couldn't have told you."

"Oh, father, do not say so. I know you did not mean to have told me, but you spoke in your sleep, and that's the way I found it out."

"The devil! What did I say?"

"That the Indians intended attacking the settlement," she replied. She could not bring herself to tell him all.

For a long time the outlaw fixed his searching eye upon her, but the unfaltering gaze that met his at length led him to believe that she had heard nothing more, and he framed his answer accordingly.

"I don't much blame you, Ruth, for I don't know but I'd done as you did; that is, if I and these Injins wasn't such good friends. I meant to tell you in the morning 'bout what I'd heard, and you could have had a chance to have told them. I tell you, Ruth, it's the best plan always to look out for yourself, and let other folks do so for themselves. It's going to be hard work for the whites in the settlements to keep their scalps on, for the Injins are going to try kill off all of them on this continent."

"Then we will be likely to share the same fate, for why should they except us?"

"You might as well know first as last, girl, that I've turned Injin out-and-out, and we've got to live with them in future."

"*Father!*"

'Twas but a simple expression—the utterance of a name around which cluster so many fond memories; but there was in it, in this instance, a pathos, a tone of sorrow, of despair that showed the outlaw he had forever lost the confidence and respect of his child.

"Well, speak out what you think," he said, angrily "Haven't you got any thing to say but that?"

"Have I not always obeyed you? Have I not sat, night after night, as my poor mother did, waiting for your return so as to give you food if you were hungry? Is there any thing I have missed doing that I thought would make you happy or add to your comfort?"

"Well, Ruth, don't make such an ado about it; 'twas your duty."

"Perhaps it was," she murmured, sadly. "But for all these favors, father"—laying her hand on his arm, for he was beginning to get fidgety—"for the sake of her that loved you till the day she died, I would ask you to return to your own people, and if it's God's will they perish, let us perish with them." She said this with impressive solemnity.

"It's too late for that," was the impatient answer, a slight shudder convulsing him at the mention of his wife. "I've gone too far to go back, and life's sweet to any man."

"Then I must leave you," she replied, firmly, "for I shall *never* forsake my own color, not even at your command."

"Fool, do you think you could leave this village without falling in with some Injin scout?"

"I shall try, let the danger be what it will," she answered, resolutely.

"And I'll see it don't do you any good, girl," he added, grasping her fiercely by the arm. "Come, Modocawan the chief wants to see you, and he won't be over pleased to be kept waiting so long."

Ruth, powerless under the control of the brute strength of her inhuman father, felt that some new trouble was to

confront her. She submissively allowed herself to be led into the chieftain's presence.

The expression that flitted over the Indian's countenance was one of entire satisfaction as his eye fell upon the form of Ruth. Rising from his couch of furs, he approached them, and waving all others from his presence, said :

"The daughter of our white brother is fair as the morning light, and the heart of Modocawan warms toward her. Does my brother guess what thought now dwells in my breast?"

"I'm sure I don't, chief," replied the outlaw, in the Indian tongue; yet he half surmised what it was.

"Does my brother see all the country round this village? Can his feet climb the tall mountains, or descend in the deep valley, should he walk for one whole moon?"

The outlaw shook his head.

"Modocawan owns it all," replied the Indian, drawing himself up proudly. "And the squaw that shall live in his wigwam shall share it with him. Will my brother give me his fair flower? Will she be the red-man's wife?"

Heartless as the man was, he felt for a moment like refusing the request. His eye wandered first from his child to the chieftain. In the former there was written painful inquiry—a quick, wild look, blending into despair. Although she comprehended nothing of what they were saying, yet she was well aware, from the many glances directed toward her, that she was the subject of their conversation. Upon the countenance of the chief there rested the one severe, stolid consciousness of power. As he met the deep, dark eye fixed upon him, and the plumed head slightly bent to catch his answer, the outlaw felt it would be dangerous to trifle, or to avert a direct affirmative answer. The slight consideration he felt for Ruth's happiness vanished like the morning mist before his sudden dream of power and honor to follow. Lowering his voice, he answered :

"I have said that, in future, I should be one of your tribe that the home of the pale-face should be no longer my home, nor should I ever more mix with them. Why, then, should I not feel proud to have my child the chosen wife of so great a chief as Modocawan? Let my brother speak to her; but let his words be mild as the summer breeze, and give her

time to prepare for what she so little expects. Have I answered well?"

"You have," replied the Indian; yet no visible sign of satisfaction showed itself upon his painted cheeks. "I find my brother loves the red-men, and no harm shall ever come to his wigwam. Let him look among the daughters of the Wampanoags and see if there is not one he would take to raise his corn, to dress his food, or to tend him when the Great Spirit frowns sickness upon him."

"I shall see," was the short reply; and turning, he walked toward the entrance, not caring to witness the effect the chief's disclosure would have upon his daughter.

We will not narrate the manner adopted by Modocawan to inform Ruth of his and her father's determination. For some time the poor girl strove to believe that she had not rightly understood the imperfect language used by the chief; but, little by little, the truth flashed itself upon her. What pen can portray her agony? what language describe her grief? Her brain grew dizzy, and yet she did not swoon. Her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, but no flood of tears came to quench their burning. She stood before that basins like a colorless statue, as motionless, pale and cold. For a long time she remained thus standing; then starting, like a person awakened from some horrid dream, she said, in a low, rapid voice, husky in its tone:

"Chief, this can not, shall not be. The Great Spirit, who made both red and white, gave us each a different nature. You love to dwell within the dark, distant woods; I among the dwellings of my people. You delight in bloodshed—to steal upon the slumbering villagers, and, in the dead of night, to kill both old and young, male and female. I love to listen to the ringing ax, the lowing of cattle, of sounds that tell alone of peace. Our tastes are then so different, how could we live together? No, no! I say again, take my life if you will, but I shall never be your wife. Never—never!"

"Squaw lub some young pale-face man, that make her talk so?" he said at once, his countenance wearing the same stolid expression.

"I will speak the truth," she replied, hoping, perhaps, that when he knew her hand already was plighted, he would

forego pressing his suit. "I do love one of my own color and have promised to become his wife."

"What his name, and where he live? Chief send warrior to him; tell him come take squaw away."

"He can be found in the settlement that lays to the south. His name is Watson," replied the girl, quickly, believing that her hour of deliverance was at hand.

After pondering for some time, the Indian abruptly dismissed her, and then beckoned to the outlaw.

"Sagamore," his voice assuming the low, tremulous tone, so plainly indicative of passion struggling for the mastery, "your child loves the son of a pale-face."

"I know there has been a young fellow at my cabin several times; but what of that?"

"She will not take the chief of the Wampanoags; her heart lives in the homes of her race."

"You have told her you wanted her for a wife?"

A slight inclination of the plumed head was the reply.

"And she answered—"

"That the Great Spirit made the poor Indian and the proud pale-face to live apart," he replied, advancing to the entrance. "Am I not a man? Are you more? Can not I see? Can not I think? What better can pale-face do? The red-man hungers; so does he. I am sick; so is he. All alike, save in skin. Go, tell your child she *shall* be the wife of Modocawan."

As he uttered this last brief order he stepped out into the open air, and summoned one of his warriors, to whom he gave some instructions, and then dispatched him.

Day succeeded day without Ruth's hearing any thing either from her father or the chief, and she fondly hoped that the latter had relinquished all thoughts of making her his wife. Poor girl, how little did she know what was yet in store for her! Merciful indeed is an all-wise God to so create us that we know not what a day will bring forth.

Nearly a week had passed, and the shadows were extending far toward the east, when Ruth received an unexpected summons to meet the chief. With a palpitating heart and a throbbing brow she instantly obeyed. As she approached his

wigwam, she observed her father, in company with one of the warriors, enter. This would have seemed a trifling matter, had there not rested on his countenance a look which sent a chill of apprehension through her entire being.

"Ruth," commenced her father, as she entered, "you don't forget what was said to you the other day?"

"I remember it but too well, father," she said, raising her sad eyes to his face.

"I suppose your mind's made up, then?"

"I then gave my answer, and it shall never be changed."

"What do if chief say must?"

"I can not tell; I put my trust in the Great Spirit of my people, knowing that he will not leave me."

"What do if white lubber die?"

The girl started at the question. It certainly meant something. Approaching a step or two nearer, she fixed her tearless eyes upon the Indian.

"If he should die?" she echoed, in a husky voice.

"Yes; what do den?"

She started now in terror, for the freezing conviction was slowly stealing into her mind, that he on whom her only hope of happiness depended either was dead or in great danger.

"Why do you ask me such a question? Oh, tell me, chief. Father, in mercy, tell me. Has any thing befallen Philip?"

"Modocawan nebber lies," replied the Indian. "He say dat you *must* be his wife. Soon he go on war-path 'gainst your people. When he go he leabe you in his wigwam." Here, motioning to the warrior who had entered with her father, he continued: "Can squaw tell what *dat* is?"

Ruth turned her eyes upon the Indian, who slowly drew aside his blanket, and exhibited a yet bleeding scalp.

Well might the inhuman father gaze with horror on his child. Gazing, for a moment, upon those brown tresses, she slowly approached. Her great eyes stared like fixed stars. The face became pale as alabaster, yet the veins stood out on her temples like cords. Her breathing was not perceptible: she seemed like one bereft of all consciousness—of time and place—of every thing save of that bloody signet. Extending her hand, she touched it. A smile flitted over her face—

such a ghastly smile as it was horrible to behold. Then stooping low, she imprinted a kiss upon the scalp—a kiss that left upon her lips the red mark of death.

Philip Watson had been murdered, and Ruth Seaman was a maniac!

“Ruth, daughter Ruth, for God’s sake, what are you doing?” cried the outlaw, scarce knowing what he said, and tartled at the shocking scene enacted before his eyes.

“Father!”

The eye of that bold man sunk before the fierce gaze fixed upon him. Both Indian and white man trembled. The voice came as from the grave. It was as if the unmoving tongue of death had spoken, or the strong lips of some statue had uttered a sound without a breath.

“Give me the trophy,” she suddenly exclaimed, snatching the scalp from the Indian’s belt, and with it his knife. Then, holding it before her, she gave a shrill laugh, and, as her awful mirth subsided, continued:

“It’s your hair, Philip, and they killed you that your bride should become the wife of the murderer. Ha! ha! ha! They shall be cheated of their prize. We shall not be separated long, my Philip; only until Ruth shall have shed blood for blood!”

She paused, and, fixing the treasure—for such, indeed, it was to her—about her waist, turned, and confronted the Indian. “Will the great chief of the Wampanoags now take the pale-face maiden for his wife? Would he make his bed of thorns, or take to his arms the savage wolf? If so, he will find both in me. Red-man, you murdered *him*. Ruth will have revenge—*revenge*! Philip’s soul calls for it from the clouds—from the hearthstone—from the ground. *Revenge*! Ha! ha! ha!”

She hurried from the place. None essayed to check her steps. The warriors, across whose path she strode, gave place and bowed their heads. The Great Spirit had sent his loud to encircle her brow; the light of an unearthly fire was in her eye. The red-man saw it and was afraid. Ruth was harmless, now, from savage touch.

CHAPTER V

THE APPARITION AND THE LOSS.

"FATHER, may not you and our good friend here be mistaken in your fears of an attack by the Indians?" asked Mary Wilber, one evening some three weeks after the night on which the outlaw had made his visit, as they were seated after supper, the scout and Atwood being present.

"Why do you ask, Mary?" inquired Mr. Wilber.

"Because they have shown no signs of their presence."

"The very thing that would lead me to think their intentions are hostile. If they felt friendly, most certainly they would visit the village, as has been their custom. I am, however, a poor hand at judging, so I must refer you, my child, to one who thoroughly understands them, and that is our friend Peter."

"Can you tell why we have not been attacked before this?" she inquired of the scout.

"It's because they ain't ready," was the blunt reply. "You see, Miss, a red-skin knows more than some whites, and he ain't a-going to do a thing till he sees a good chance for success. I ain't over fast in speaking 'bout myself, but I'm thinking that they've been told by John that *I'm* here, and they know there ain't a trick of theirs but that I'm up to."

"You seem thoughtful of late—why is this? You surely are not fearful of the result, should an attack be made?"

"Not I," he replied, quickly raising his head and glancing at her. "I've been, Miss, where many a man wouldn't like to be, and it never scared me a bit. Month after month I've made my home by the border of some lake, while the reds were hunting for me night and day. I've followed the track of a deer till I've come up and shot the poor thing, and then camped out with it, while the whole of the night I've had to fight off the wolves that had smelt its blood. But that ain't half as bad as a good many scrapes I've been in; so what do you s'pose I care 'bout br'ing a fight now, when I've got plenty of friends to back?"

"I don't doubt your bravery, but there seems to be something on your mind."

"You're right, Miss, there is."

"Won't you tell me what it is?"

"P'raps it ain't nothing, and p'raps it is; but it wouldn't do you any good to hear it."

"If it is any thing that concerns our welfare, you should not hesitate for one moment in telling it," said Mr. Wilber, wishing to find out what it was that seemed to affect the scout.

"I don't know, squire, as it's got any thing to do with the fight we're going to have, so let's talk no more 'bout it."

The reluctance manifested by the scout only made Mr. Wilber more determined to find out its cause. All were well convinced that, with a man of his years and experience, it was no slight circumstance which could affect him so seriously. He was at length compelled to speak:

"Wal!" he exclaimed, reluctantly, "if you must know I'll tell you. First, then, there ain't many things that happen in the woods but we scouts find out. If I hear a noise, it don't make any difference whether it's the snap of a dry twig or the noise of the wind, or the cry of some animal, I'm bound to know what's meant by it, and as soon as I've found out I'm all right. Now you know I've been out taking a look round every night since I first came, and all's been right til 'bout four days back—"

"What did you hear?" asked Mary, excitedly.

"I was some six miles away," he continued, without minding the interruption, "and was on my way back, when I heard a cry that made my hair raise my cap clean off my head. It warn't an Injin, and it warn't a beast, and what it was the Great Spirit only knows."

"What was it like?" inquired all at a breath.

"It warn't like nothing as ever I heard afore. First I thought 'twas a cat: then it seemed like an owl, but at last it gave a laugh jest like a human."

"Have you heard it since?"

"Every night!"

"And always the same?"

"Yes, always the same."

"What can it be?"

"That's hard tellin, and I've made up my mind that I ain't over anxious to be in the woods alone again till I've found out. It's something that ain't human, that's sartin."

"Nonsense, Peter," exclaimed Mr. Wilber, "you are as superstitious as an Indian. Surely a man who possesses the quickness of apprehension you do, can not believe in what are generally termed ghosts?"

"See here, squire," began the scout, not liking the idea of being ridiculed, "what would you do if you heard or saw something you couldn't make out?"

"I should consider it singular, but should feel, at the same time, that something would turn up and make it all plain."

"I ain't been brought up as you have, and ain't got the gift to talk like you; but, when you come to sights and sounds in the woods, I don't let any man teach me; and when I hear a cry like that I've told you 'bout, I say something ain't right."

As he finished speaking, the door of the cabin was slowly opened with so little noise that none knew it except the scout, who chanced to sit directly opposite. The man's startled manner at once attracted attention, and looking to see the cause, they observed the figure of a female then standing within the shadow of the chimney. It was impossible to say whether she was an Indian or one of their neighbors.

"Will you tell me, my good woman, what you wish?" asked Mr. Wilber, breaking the silence.

"To save your life," was the reply, uttered in so unearthly a tone that it sent a cold chill through all.

"But how are we in danger?"

"Modocawan, chief of the Wampanoags, hates the pale-faces and thirsts for their blood," was the reply.

"How know you this?"

"The voice of sleep toid me."

"She is crazy," turning to Peter, but the scout seemed not to hear; his eye was fixed on the stranger.

"How could that be; I don't understand your meaning?" he squire again interrogated.

"The bad man can not rest. He shuts his eyes and sleeps, but thought finds words and speaks. I heard them, and am come to warn you." She broke into a low laugh, which suddenly ceased, and then continued: "He told me the Indians

meant to have the lives of every pale-face, till they killed or drove them from these shores. But they would not kill him or his child, because they had left their people and joined the red-man's family. I have lived with them and have seen them coming. Get to the block-house! They will be here *to-night!* But look before you go at what I took from them—*Isn't it worth the taking?*"

Again she uttered that laugh, and throwing off the mantle she wore, stepped close to the light. To the horror of all—the scout excepted—she held aloft a human scalp.

Sudden as was her action, it was not more quick than was that of Peter. Springing to her side, he seized her by her arm, and gazed intently in her face.

"It's you, Ruth, is it? I know you now," he said. "But you've changed, gal, yes, changed so that your own mother wouldn't know you at first. Who's done this?" he asked, sharply, after a pause. "Tell Peter Simpson whose done this, and may I have no rest upon my dying bed, if I don't hunt the man out, be he Injin or white, and make him remember the day he made you what you are. It's true, squire, what you said 'bout that noise. Ruth's the one that made it."

"You know who she is then, poor thing?"

"Sartin, I know her. It's Ruth, the outlaw's daughter."

"You never mentioned the fact of her being deranged."

"She never was as I knowed of; and I tell you all, there's been some foul play as has done this."

"The scalp—where could she have got it?"

"I'll find that out, and if she'll only tell who done t'other thing, I'll trail day and night, year in and year out, but I'll bring this thing to sight on him." He brought his hard hand with violence upon the stock of his gun, while, in his usually mild eye, there burned a fierce expression which told plainly that his resolve was fixed. Turning to the girl, he asked in a voice which none present ever had heard him use, so sweet was its tone:

"Do you know me, Ruth?"

"Let me think," came the slow answer, as passing her hand across her brow, she seemed trying to collect her wandering thoughts; "was it in the forest, down by the brook I saw you?"

"No, gal, not 'ker."

"Oh, I remember now; 'twas at our cabin. You were sick and I nursed you. Are you strong enough to get out now?"

"That I am, and strong enough to do the man a bad turn that harmed you. Will you tell Peter who it was that took that scalp—that made you wild?"

"I can't, I can't," she murmured, with a slight shudder, and her eye again began to burn with its fierce light. "I have taken his knife. See, here it is," she exclaimed, eagerly. "It is red with Philip's blood, but it will be redder yet. His spirit calls me away, but I will not go until the knife is redder yet."

"You ain't the one to do it; give it to me, gal, and if I don't use it right, then jest set me down as a sneaking red-skin, and that's 'bout as mean a thing as a man can be. Ruth," he continued, taking her hand in his rough palm, and speaking slowly and impressively, "I ain't the man that can forget what you've done for me; and now, if you'll jest tell who's the man that's done this, I'll find him, if I hunt the woods for years. You ain't fit, gal, to go by yourself, kase your brain ain't right. Perhaps your father—"

With a quick bound the girl was on her feet, while the expression of her face for a moment was hideous. The hunter stopped short and gazed at her, and then nodding, said, half aloud:

"I don't want to hear no more, kase it's as clear as daylight now."

Ruth, after retaining her motionless attitude for some time, turned, and for the first seemed to notice Mary's presence in the room. Going to her side, she nestled at her feet, and appeared eager to communicate something which her diseased brain refused to remember. At length the idea again crossed her of the errand that had brought her to the village, and, in broken sentences, oft wandering upon other thoughts, she warned Mary of danger pending to herself. When she had finished she rose, and going to the door was about to make her exit, when she assumed a listening attitude. Then, placing her finger upon her lips, she uttered the word, "coming," and, with a motion quick as impulse itself, sprung through the door and was soon lost to sight.

A silence reigned upon them all, until it was at length broken by Peter's rising to his feet, and proceeding to narrowly inspect his rifle.

"Squire," he said, "you had better take Ruth's advice and get the folks into the block-house before morning. I don't think there's much fear 'bout their showing themselves to-night, but it's safe to get a little the start, and I ain't sure but the gal knows more than she told. Poor thing," he added, as if to himself, "it ain't so long ago that I saw you as well as any gal in this settlement, ay, and as nice a one too, and now your senses clean gone, and you don't know nor care where you're going."

"Do you think she was sincere in her threats against the person who has brought this great evil upon her?" inquired Mr. Wilber.

"She's jest as sure to do it as I am that she shan't if I can stop her. But, squire, we've talked too long already; now let's be doing. You, boy, take a run round to the folks, and tell them to pack up and get ready to move, and I'll take a walk round the woods. If I ain't back soon, get to the block-house, and put the best men you've got on watch."

Atwood at once started, and the scout only lingered long enough to add a few words of advice as a guide to Mr. Wilber, when he disappeared across the clearing.

A little after midnight all was in readiness, and, as Peter had not returned, Mr. Wilber ordered the movement to commence. Feeling confident that, if danger was near at hand, the scout would apprise him, he had left his own house to facilitate matters, leaving his daughter alone. The most tardy villager was ready, and many had already reached the fort, when, as he was about giving some further order to Atwood, both were startled by a shrill cry for help. It was at once recognized as the voice of Mary Wilber. With a speed surprising for a man of his years, he started toward the house, followed closely by Atwood and several of the neighbors. Quick as were their movements, they arrived only to find her gone. The fearful truth, as it burst with full force upon the father, completely paralyzed him; with a groan of anguish, he tottered forward and grasped the casement for support. Not so, however, with the young man. He instantly threw himself

upon the ground, so as to bring any object that might yet be in the opening between him and the sky, and distinctly saw the forms of several Indians hurrying forward, forcing with them the struggling girl.

"This way, men—follow me," he shouted, springing forward.

"Do you see her?" asked Mr. Wilber, faintly.

"Yes, plainly; but let's hurry on, neighbors, or we shall lose her," he replied.

"Don't a man of you stir one step!" It was the scout who at that moment joined them.

"Don't heed him boys, but come on," commanded Atwood. His anger roused in an instant, and the men were again on the point of pressing forward, when the scout again bade them remain.

"Stranger!" exclaimed Atwood, almost beside himself, "you've been of great help to us, but when there's a chance of our saving that girl's life, which is dearer to me than my own, and you refuse not only to help but keep the rest back, our friendship's at an end."

"Who's the man that says I wouldn't help?"

"I do."

"How do you know?"

"By your actions."

"Kase I ain't a fool, and don't start off like the wind arter them reds. I s'pose that's what you mean?"

"And why shouldn't we? Ain't we got them in sight now, and if we wait, God knows when we shall find her, if ever. You can stay if you like, but I'm going if I go alone."

"You jest stop and hear what I've got to say. Do you think them sarpents would let you get the gal back safe and sound, if you did ketch them to-night? Not a bit of it. They'd send a tomahawk into her skull jest 'bout the time you'd think she was saved. Them Injins ain't done this of their own accord, but that outlaw has planned it, and if he warn't with them he's been close at hand."

"But Peter, what—" commenced Atwood, feeling convinced that the scout was right.

"Don't you ask me any questions for I ain't the time to answer," he said, interrupting him. "We've got to look with

all our eyes, and work with all our strength, kase we ain't got no small job afore us, and very little time to do it in, if we get all the folks snug in the block-house this night. Don't you worry, squire, 'bout the gal, kase I first want to see you safe, and then I'll start on her trail."

He now hastened back to the village, and hurried forward all who were not yet out of danger. The news that one of heir number had been taken captive was a sufficient incentive. Soon the entire population were safely sheltered, and made as comfortable as the narrow limits of the little fort would afford. Under the direction of the scout, many of the weak places were strengthened; the men were divided into four watches, and their hours of duty named.

The reason why Peter had not seen the Indians who had so successfully effected the capture of Mary was, that they approached the cabin from its rear, while he entered the woods from the front; consequently, there had not time enough elapsed for him to make the entire circuit. As it was, however, his quick ear had detected a slight sound which at once awoke suspicion, and his eye had discerned the dim outline of their shadowy forms before they had reached the house. As they came within range of his gun, his first impulse was to fire; but a moment's reflection showed how foolish such an attempt would be. He well knew that no very small war-party of the enemy would thus boldly approach the house, unless they were well supported; and, did he commence hostilities, it might bring on a general attack, the result of which would be an entire success to them, while death and hopeless confusion would fall to the lot of the villagers. He also felt assured that, whatever chief the Indians were under, he had allowed the outlaw to carry out his design first, and that when it was either accomplished or otherwise, very little time would be wasted before the attack would commence.

The very moment he felt all was secure, and that his presence could be dispensed with, he sought Mr. Wilber, and gave a few parting words of advice.

"Won't to-morrow do better for you to start? Do not think by my proposing this," continued Mr. Wilber, quickly, for he noticed the surprised look of the scout, "that I'm forgetting my poor child; but my thoughts and duty are with these

poor people, and I would like your presence and counsel as long as possible. It is so dark to-night, that it will be impossible to follow her."

"You don't know much 'bout follering trail," replied the scout, "and can't think how easy it is for men brought up in the woods to do things that villagers wouldn't think possible. I can't foller her track fast, that's sartin, but I can get some miles on it afore morning. But it ain't that, squire, that makes me want to start now. You see the sarpents ain't got every thing fixed yet, but if I wait till morning, they'll have a warrior behind every tree that grows on the edge of this clearing. No, no, squire; I must get on the outside of them, jest as soon as I can pick out what boys I want to have along with me."

Prompt as were his general movements, he made selection of some six of the best young men, including Atwood, and, after allowing a few moments for leave-taking, the gate of the block-house was thrown open, and they started out in the darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PURSUIT.

As the scout moved through the deserted village, not a word was spoken. His little band seemed impressed with the peril attending their undertaking, and each busied himself with his own thoughts. Not one of them but was a brave, tried man; yet, as the dull echo of their footsteps, thrown back from their now tenantless homes, smote their ear, a cold shiver or slight start betokened the fears of all, the scout excepted. On they moved; out upon the clearing, where the slight rustle of the distant forest-leaves were heard, as well as the soothing murmur of the little stream. The manner of the scout now evinced the utmost caution. At times, he would, in a low whisper, order the party to halt, while he proceeded some distance in advance; then, returning he would lead them forward again.

"Why don't you strike the trail?" asked Atwood, cautiously, surprised that the scout was directing their course away from, rather than toward it.

"Kase I know more about Injins than you," was the not very civil reply.

"But you'll miss it altogether if you don't strike it befor coming to the timber," he returned, apparently not heeding the bluntness of their guide.

"There 'ud be more than one kind of strike, if I did a you think I ought."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Boy," he exclaimed, turning about quickly, "when I'm on the war-path, and following trail in the bargain, it takes as much as one man can do to think and keep his mouth shut. If you don't think I know what I'm doing, you take three of the men and go ahead on your own hook. I'll tell you this once, howsomever, *why* I don't take the trail on the start, and it's this: jest where them reds struck the woods they've left some of their party, kase they think some of us will be fools enough to follow that way. Now, I'm 'bout as fond of my life as the next man, and ain't going to rush right into certain death if I know what I'm 'bout; but jest you go if you don't like my way; push out for yourself."

Atwood said nothing in reply, for he saw that the scout was, as usual, in the right.

"Wal, what are you going to do?"

"Follow you."

"Come on then."

Immediately on reaching the opposite side of the stream, they obeyed a motion from their guide, and, throwing themselves on their hands and knees, in this slow and painful manner passed over the intervening distance to the woods. Having reached it, they again halted until it was ascertained that none of their enemy lurked near them, when they again started and proceeded as rapidly as the darkness would admit.

The scout directed their course, not in a straight line, but toward the right, or, more properly, obliquing in the direction of the trail, so that when they did strike it, which was done at a distance of two miles, it would lead those who might follow them to believe that they had not sought it purposely.

As they crossed it, the scout ordered Atwood to lead the men in a line parallel to it, and as far distant as possible, yet within easy hearing, while he followed immediately upon it. The young man saw at once what was intended, and gave instructions that the party should imitate, as near as possible, the Indian manner of walking.

The day had dawned when they arrived at the border of a small lake, close by whose edge the trail had led them. Here they rested long enough to partake of a simple meal, and then started on.

"Where do you suppose they can be taking her to?" anxiously asked Atwood. "This isn't the same way we traveled the other night."

"It ain't, so far; but it's hard telling how many miles they'll travel, or how many turns they'll make afore they stop. I've followed the varmints for a whole week, while, if they'd only have gone in a straight line, it wouldn't have taken me more than two days to have come up with them."

"Do you suppose, Peter, that they are making their journey long on purpose?"

"I can't say for sartin how that is. Perhaps they are making for one of their towns, and perhaps they are only trying to give us a long walk."

"I suppose they are pretty sure of being followed?"

"Injins don't s'pose any thing. What they do is done for sartin, and smart as we whites think ourselves, there's many a lesson we can learn from them. Now, 'bout this trail. You don't s'pose they've had much of a talk, if they've said a single word, do you?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Wal, I know they ain't. The chief or head warrior who led them has made up his mind what to do, and the rest have followed without asking questions."

In this conjecture the scout was perfectly right. The party who had gained possession of the girl had not stopped to conjecture the probabilities of their being followed, but had taken the event as a matter of course, and acted accordingly. This is a singular yet truthful trait of the Indian character. Whatever is likely to occur is with them looked upon as a

verity; the probabilities opposing it are not taken into consideration.

It was not until late in the afternoon that any thing occurred to arouse the scout's attention. The trail had led them for some miles along the top of a rise of ground, when it suddenly descended to what might, from its general appearance, be called a river bottom, so much did it resemble the strips of land found lying along the numerous streams of the far Northwest—then an unexplored country. To use a woodsman's term, the land was more heavily timbered, and but few if any of those open or clear spaces were seen; yet the eye would encounter, as it wandered through the vista of trees, the distant glimpse of many a glade and charming grove.

The eye of Atwood, although much as he held his own judgment and woodcraft in high repute, would have failed to observe the signs of danger which his more experienced guide at once detected. The trail, owing to the soft nature of the ground, was here very distinct, and the small foot of Mary had left many a mark. As the hound warms when his long exertions have brought him close to his prey, and the fresh scent assures him of the fact, so did the scout seem to burn with eagerness in the pursuit. With his head bent forward, he sprung rapidly on, bidding fair to leave his party far behind, when, as he reached a large tree, he suddenly stopped, and, as Atwood came up and inquired the cause, he was pointed to where the trail divided, one passing to the right and the other to the left of the tree.

Here again the young man would have asked the whys and wherefores, had not the scout's manner held him silent. That trail which turned to the right proved, upon following it some distance, to continue on, although the footprints of the girl were no longer to be seen, while that which led to the left took them to a rock, at the top of which the prints suddenly ended. The question now arose—what had become of it? and to find this out the men began making circles around the rock, each time extending them further and further, until not a foot of ground had been left unsearched for a considerable distance, yet their trouble was unrewarded. The scout, meanwhile, had remained standing where the trail broke off. Even he seemed at a loss what to do. Evidently he settled the

question at length, for glancing above him, he noticed that a large limb extended to within easy springing distance.

"It ain't no use hunting 'round any more, kase them varmints got up in this tree, and, as there ain't no chance for them to get from it to another, they're up it yet, or they've come down its body again." So saying, he commenced narrowly inspecting the trunk.

Had the Indians who used this precaution for throwing off or bewildering any who might follow them been aware that so thorough a guide as the scout was directing the movements of their pursuers, they would not have wasted their time.

Peter was not long in making the discovery that those who had got into the tree by means of the branch had descended again by the trunk. Plentiful evidences of this were to be found in the loose pieces of bark that lay about the roots, together with many scraped places caused by their moccasins. It was clear to the experienced eye of the scout that they had, on reaching the ground, stepped cautiously into the tracks made by their companions on the right hand division of the trail, and thus have proceeded with them, instead of having, as they wished it to appear, parted with them altogether. There was still one other very important fact Pete had learned, which was that the Indians had fully calculated on being followed, consequently they would be watchful. In fact, it was not improbable that they would retrace their steps, or lay in ambush, hoping to destroy the presumptuous pale-face who should dare to follow. This he kept to himself, feeling assured that no immediate danger was to be apprehended, yet determined that so soon as it should become dark his party should leave the trail, and lay in wait for any of their enemies who might think best to return.

The feverish desire that Atwood manifested to move on rapidly, was checked by what seemed to him an unwarrantable amount of caution on the part of their guide. The trail was now so easily seen that the young man felt that every step carried them nearer their foe, making his blood tingle through his veins as he warmed for the battle.

"Atwood," asked one of the men, in a tone too low to reach the ear of any save the one addressed, "who is this guide of ours?"

"You ask more than I can tell you," was the reply.

"Why, didn't you go out with him once before, and ain't he been staying for some time with the squire?"

"Yes, but for all that I know nothing of him save that his name is Peter, and that he's a chap that don't fear any man, be he white or red."

"He knows what he's about, that's sure," was the reply, as they hurried to regain the little ground they had lost.

"I don't see why he moves so slow," again remarked Atwood. "Here we are in open woods, with no bush for an Indian to hide, and the trail as plain as if it was made but a minute back. Seems to me if I had the lead I'd give you a run for a few miles. My plan would be to get up with them as soon as I could, because every step we take leads us further from home, and far into their country."

"Perhaps I'd do jest as you would, but do you know, I've got faith in that chap, and I believe he'll bring us out all right in the end. But where's he going now?"

This exclamation was caused by the scout suddenly turning from the trail, and directing his course toward a spot where grew a thick clump of bushes, the first that had been met with for some time. As soon as the men had gathered about him, he briefly told them what he expected, and then gave them to understand that there they would remain through the night, unless circumstances compelled them to do otherwise. His next step was to effectually conceal their footmarks, and then all hastened to improve the moment of rest afforded them.

An hour or more had sped, when Atwood felt a hand upon his shoulder, which at once aroused him. Starting up, he saw the dim outline of the scout standing by him.

"We're nearer the varmints than I thought," he said. "That is, we're nearer *some* of them; but whether they're the ones we're arter or not I can't tell."

"Have you seen any of them?" eagerly questioned the young man.

"Yes."

"How many and where?"

"Do you see that clear spot of sky jest on that little rise of ground?"

"I see it."

"Wal, look sharp and tell me what else you see."

The young man did as requested, and at length made out what to him seemed a human figure, but of gigantic proportions, standing out against the dark-blue sky beyond. So motionless was it, that he felt a shiver run through his frame.

"What are you shaking 'bout?" asked the scout, noticing he tremor.

"What is that thing?"

"Can't *you* tell."

"It looks like a man."

"And so it is, boy, and an Injin at that."

"How long has he been standing there?"

"'Bout half an hour."

"What are you going to do?"

"Make his acquaintance," was the determined reply; "and I want you to go with me. Now, who's the best man to leave in charge of matters here. I don't mean to have them stir till we come back, only—"

Whatever else he intended to say was cut short by a cry so shrill, so penetrating, that it rung far and wide among the deep arches of the forest. The effect produced upon the scout was scarcely to be noticed, for he well knew from whence it came; but with Atwood and the remainder of the party fear amounted almost to a panic. Those asleep were at once awakened, while the rest sprung to their feet, and stood ready to repel an attack. A minute or two elapsed, when it was again repeated, but at a greater distance; and when for the third and last time it echoed forth, it could but faintly be heard.

At length the men mustered courage enough to inquire the cause of that unearthly noise.

"It ain't no wonder that you're kinder skeered," replied the guide, "for I'd be if I didn't know what 'twas."

"If you know, tell us," they said, crowding around him.

"I don't s'pose you've any of you heard 'bout a gal called Ruth, the child of outlaw John, 'cept you, boy," turning to Atwood, "but it's too long a story to tell the whole on it. You needn't get scared if you hear it again, kase she's crazy-like, and makes that noise at times; but poor thing, she

wouldn't do any body harm ; that is," he added, quickly, "no white man."

"That Indian hasn't stirred yet," said Atwood, as the scout led him to one side, after he had reassured the men.

"Wal, so the varmint ain't," was the scout's astonished reply, as looking up, the figure was still seen standing as when first discovered. "That chap's got more pluck than I thought for. It ain't every Injin that would stand that noise, but he's waiting for *me*!"

"What will you do?"

"I always wait to commence a thing until I make up my mind ; so I can't tell. Now, who's the man?"

The young man pointed to one who he thought would be the most likely to fill the post while they were away. The young fellow chosen was at once informed of the temporary command assigned him.

To the numerous interrogations as to where they were going, and when they would return, they received very unsatisfactory answers. Again reiterating his command, that they were not to leave the spot without orders, the scout, followed by Atwood, took his departure.

"Now, boy, we're in for something or another soon, and it ain't going to be as easy work as we had t'other night when you and I was out. First, that big chap up there, that don't seem as if he cared to move, has got to be put out of the way, and then we'll take a look and see who's on ahead."

Notwithstanding that Atwood, as before mentioned, had become accustomed to a border life both by birth and training, and was by no means unaccustomed to listen to tales of blood, yet the off-hand, matter-of-fact tone and manner of the scout, in declaring his intentions toward the savage, seemed to him the demeanor of a heartless man. Perhaps it would have been impossible to have found two men, whose calling was so closely allied, yet who were so widely different in their manner of executing their work.

In Atwood was centered a nature kind, frank, yet hasty ; an aversion to taking life when it could possibly be avoided ; and the only impulse that urged him now so far amid the pathless forest, was the hope of restoring the woman whom he loved to her home and himself. With the scout, how

different. No motive of self-interest urged him on. In rescuing the girl, no benefits could accrue to him; yet he was willing to risk the dangerous undertaking, gathering his reward in the excitement it offered, or in the chance of settling in death one of his sworn enemies.

Proceeding with the utmost caution, they arrived within a short distance of the spot where the warrior still stood. Here he bade his companion remain, until he had accomplished the first portion of their night's work. Where the young man halted, which was at the foot of a slight elevation, an unobstructed view was had of the Indian, as well as of the movements of his companion. He could plainly see the latter—now moving silently, yet with surprising rapidity, from tree to tree, or crawling on hands and knees, like some beast of prey, until the distance was lessened for the required spring.

As he still gazed, a wild halloo reached his ear, causing the Indian to turn quickly in the direction from whence it came, thus bringing his back toward the scout. He had scarcely done so when a dark form rose quickly to its feet, an arm was raised, there was a dull, heavy blow, and the warrior sunk without a groan to the earth, a corpse. A moment later and the scout was again at Atwood's side.

"That's one less, and I'm thinking I wasn't long doing it," he said, with evident satisfaction.

"What was he doing there, do you think?"

"Waiting for some of his friends to come along."

"Then he didn't belong to those we're after?"

"Don't think he did; but let's move on, and find out all we can."

They had not gone far, and had just reached the summit of a hill, when, immediately below them, a bright fire was seen, together with numerous forms moving back and forth across its light.

"What do you think of that?" asked the scout, apparently much satisfied with the sight.

"Too many for us to handle," replied Atwood, shaking his head and seating himself as if they had accomplished all that lay in their power.

"You're right, boy; we can't fight 'em. There's only two

ways we can get that gal back alive, and that is, we've either got to follow them up and see where they carry her, or come on them when they don't expect us. You see that outlaw's made up his mind to have her, and afore he'd let us get her back he'd drive a knife into her heart, or a tomahawk into her skull."

"Can he be such a wretch? Do you think he's with the party?"

"No I don't, for he's a shrewd un, and has jest given them Injins their orders, and they daren't but obey them."

"Well," replied the young man, sighing, "we might as well go back to the rest, for all the good we can do."

"P'raps we will, but not afore I goes a little closer to them, and find out how many there are."

"Stay, Peter; you will only be taken prisoner."

"Not a bit on't," he replied, indulging in one of his peculiar laughs. "It ain't the first time I've taken a look at 'em when they didn't know it, and it won't be the last, I reckon. I tell you, boy, it does me good to sneak in among them when they think no white man's within miles; and now, if I can only fix things so as they can have a funeral next day, I've done a good night's work."

"Then if you are bound to go, I'll go with you, let come what will."

"I'm bound to, that's sartin; but I'm going alone."

"And pray, what am I to do?"

The question waited some time before it received an answer. The scout was evidently planning some double movement, which he hoped to accomplish successfully. He stood leaning on his long rifle, his eye fixed upon the distant fire, while he slowly tapped the barrel, as if desiring his tried weapon to give him a hint.

"Do you remember every inch of the way we've come?" he asked, at length, reseating himself by his companion's side.

"I think I do."

"Could you go back to any place I wanted you?"

"Yes."

"That's short, and right out, and I like it. Now, I'm thinking 'bout sending you back to the men."

"What for?"

"That's what I'll explain if you'll let me. I said it wouldn't do to bring on a fight now; but, s'pose I could show myself, and get some on 'em in the notion of follering me, what's to hinder me from stopping their getting back agin to their camp?"

"It would be a good thing; but the risk you—"

"Never mind 'bout me," he said, interrupting him. "I tend to that."

"Well, let me know what you want, and I'll do it."

"You won't have me with you, jest remember that; and it won't do for one of them to get back to their friends, if we can help it."

"I'll do all I can to prevent it; for, if taking the lives of one hundred Indians will only save Mary, I shall count it as nothing."

"That's right, boy, so listen. Over three miles back there's a hollow in the ground, on the north of the trail. One side's covered with thick bushes. Now I want you to go there as quick as you can, and, as soon as you reach it, go to work and make a fire *right in the middle*. Then, take your blanket and cape, and fix up a lot of figures jest as if you'd gone to sleep like, and mind, they've got to look natural, kase if they don't, the sarpents will quick enough find out the trick."

"Well, what then?"

"As soon as you've done this, crawl away into the bushes, and get your guns ready for use, and I'll try and bring the reds where you can get a good shot at them. If I can manage to g'ive them the slip, I'll be with you before they come ap; but if I can't, then you've got to do for yourselves, and mind what you do, you do right."

As the scout uttered this last order, he arose to his feet, and proceeded to tighten the leather-belt around his waist, and to adjust his rifle, knife and tomahawk, so that, should he be obliged to resort to crawling, they would not retard his movements. This done, he bade Atwood lose no time in following out his directions, and then abruptly left him.

It may appear singular to our readers that Atwood, who had held his own skill in woodcraft in so high esteem, should

now yield so entirely to the guidance of the scout. There was in the manner of the latter, however, an indescribable something that convinced the young man his own judgment was not to be put in comparison with that of his guide. On the night when first they had wandered forth upon the dark forest-path, he had been shown, in few words but by prompt action, how wrong had been his own surmises; and since that time, owing to the more intimate acquaintance he had formed with that singular man, he felt his own pretensions dwindle gradually, until he now promptly and implicitly obeyed the slightest behest of one so thoroughly acquainted with his calling, as was this rough-spoken, though simple-hearted scout.

On leaving the crest of the hill, Peter moved rapidly forward through the open woods, not forgetting, however, that caution which with him had become part of his nature. His eye would wander from the fire for a moment, and then would fix his gaze upon his enemies again. The nearer he approached the more his satisfaction increased, which, at times, gave itself utterance in a low but significant grunt.

Bordering the fire on the hillside was a thick growth of low bushes, which afforded an excellent screen to his onward movements; and, as the slightest noise would at once arouse the watchful savage, his progress was slow, and, at times, extremely painful. Among this thicket were numerous clear spaces; and, as the night was sufficiently clear for a vigilant foe to note every thing transpiring about them, Peter took the precaution to narrowly survey the ground before passing over. It was while thus engaged that his attention was arrested by a dark object standing a little to his right. For the moment he felt sure it was an Indian; but, upon careful inspection, the outline of the figure became more distinct, discovering it to be a female form, and that none other than the outlaw's daughter.

We should be doing great injustice to the hardy frontiersman, did we allow the reader to suppose that this knowledge of the girl's presence caused him any degree of pleasure. Although he was accustomed to, and, we may add, had a taste for, scenes of danger, and the wild life he led, yet, at this moment, he felt a chill of horror as he thought of the

motives which urged her to so far forget her sex, and persevere in following, with such deadly purposes, the red-man's track. He could have readily avoided her by retracing his steps, but this he could not have done had the thought even entered his mind. The past kindness of Ruth was held in grateful remembrance, and Peter was willing to forego his highly-prized "plan" in the hope of persuading her to return to the settlement. In this he was frustrated, however, as will be seen.

Fearful of exciting her to utter one of her wild cries, did he abruptly show himself, he began crawling cautiously on, following the edge of the thicket, and pausing, at times, to note whether the slight noise he made had reached her quick ear. The girl remained as motionless as when first discovered, until he arrived at a point directly in the rear of the spot where her attention seemed riveted, when, raising himself, he uttered a low, mournful note, using that remarkable ventriloquial power of which he was a complete master, causing the sound to appear as if it came from a distance, to his left. Whether she heard him or not, he was unable to ascertain; for, narrowly as he watched, not the slightest change of attitude was to be observed. Again the sound was repeated, and this time with effect, for she stepped several paces forward. Fearful that she might suddenly leave the place, Peter threw his voice first to the right, then behind him, or in the bushes directly in his front. The girl was evidently bewildered. Now she could be seen to stoop, then spring rapidly to her feet, and seem on the point of fleeing affrightedly away, when the voice coming from a contrary direction again caused her to pause.

"Ruth!"

She turned quickly around, for there was no mistaking now from whence the voice came.

"Ruth!" he again called, in a low, distinct tone, mellowing the usual harshness of his speech by that peculiar sweetness of intonation which he could command, yet so rarely used. "It's a friend, gal, as is calling you, so come this way."

She hesitated but a moment, then slowly approached the spot, stopping now and then as if suspicious of some hidden danger.

"Who calls Ruth?" she asked.

"An old friend, child," he answered, with as much tenderness as if addressing an infant.

"Friend!" she echoed, drearily. "I had friends once, but the worms feed on them now."

Such was the despair of her voice and wildness of her manner, that Peter's hand instinctively fell upon the handle of his knife; and had the light been sufficient, the fiercest glares of hatred and revenge that sparkled in his eye would have betrayed to the observant savage the vindictive passions of the man his people had made their life-long enemy.

"Not all on 'em, gal, not all on 'em," he replied, with much earnestness, after a moment's silence. "I've lost friends myself, but I've got some left, and so have you. Jest take a look round among the woods, and see how the Great Spirit has made the tall tree for the vine to grow around. There ain't nuthing he's made but's doing good to something else, and it's so, gal, with us humans. Men couldn't live without some friend, or some one to love of his own kind; and if we do lose one, that ain't to say we've lost all. I ain't over fond of that father of yours, and don't know but we'll have some hard blows if we meet; but I feel friendly to you, gal, and don't like to see you going 'bout in this way by yourself. It ain't nat'ral for you to follow trail like a red-skin. If you'll go back to the settlement, I'll take your place and bring you as many scalps—if it's them bloody things you're arter—as will satisfy any human."

Whether she comprehended his entire words can not be said. Her answer was a simple shake of the head, while she chanted in a low, sweet voice, a loving ballad, sung so often in the full happiness of her requited love. Her clouded memory, perchance, was revealing to her in that lone mid night hour, the time when, seated beneath the wide-spreading branches of some moss-covered forest-tree, and the little brook that flowed hard by the trysting-place, rippling and sparkling at her feet, of the manly form that held her to his breast, and how he loved to hear her warble this selfsame song.

The scout essayed to speak but could not. As already noted, he had become so thoroughly acquainted with the

Indian character by mixing with them, that, as would not seem unnatural in one so entirely ignorant in some things, he had imbibed some of their superstitious dread. Little as he feared the chances of death in the undertaking he had that night started upon, he now most certainly feared the companion he had met. Rallying himself to another effort, he asked

"Won't you go back with me?"

"No."

The answer startled him, it was spoken so quickly.

"Where are you going to?"

"To Philip, by-and-by."

"You're right, gal," he replied, rising to his feet for the first time. "We've all got to die some time or other; but—"

"He's with me always," she said, interrupting him. "He's been with me to-night."

The scout glanced somewhat timidly about him and then asked: "how do you know?"

"He called me in his own sweet voice," she replied, and then her mind began to wander again from one subject to another.

Peter seemed at a loss how to answer her. At length it occurred to him that perhaps she had construed the sounds he had uttered to attract her attention into her lover's voice.

"Tell me, gal, which way did he call you from?" he asked.

"First from toward the rising of the sun, and then toward the west."

"That warn't him."

"Who then?" she asked, angrily.

"'Twas me!"

It was singular the effect this announcement had upon her. It was evident she firmly believed her lover had spoken, and when informed otherwise, seemed to think the scout was deceiving her. The very means he had employed to draw her to him, accomplished a contrary result. Raising herself proudly up, she fixed her eye full upon him, and then without a word, sprung with the quickness of a deer across the open space, and disappeared in the thicket.

"I've done all I could," sighed the scout, "and it ain't no use trying to get her back unless we carry her by force. She'll never be right till the day she dies, and that won't be long,

kase no woman but a regular born red-skin can stand living in the forest as she's doing. Now," he continued, as he once more adjusted his weapons, "for a look at them serpents. I ain't sartin but the boy 'll think I'm taken prisoner or killed and will be along to find out, so I ain't got much time to lose."

Fearful that his suspicion might prove true, he moved more rapidly than hitherto, until he arrived within a short distance of the fire. Here he again had recourse to his hands and knees, and with the utmost caution dragged himself to where a break in the bushes gave him an unobstructed view. Arriving at length at the desired spot, which was a little beyond the circle of light thrown from the fire, he saw what few could have gazed upon without feeling an emotion both of admiration and fear.

Some dozen Indians, in all the glory of their paint, lay stretched in slumber, while two remained on watch. One of these stood leaning against a tree only a few paces from the venturesome scout. The other sat close by their captive, and, at times, seemed addressing her in conversation.

"I'd like to hear what that serpent's saying," soliloquized Peter, "and what's more, I'm going to. What on 'arth does this here dirty chap want to stand so close by me for? I'd feel kinder obliged to him if he'd take a short walk, so as I could crawl a little further away, but the varmint wouldn't do that, so there ain't no use waitin'. I've jest got to make 'bout as little noise as a fly would getting through these bushes."

While he is accomplishing his purpose, let us glance for a moment at the captive, and see how she has borne her trials. When first starting from her home, the Indians had hurried her on, regardless of the pain inflicted upon her feet by the rocky path they selected, or the briars which lined either side, and which not only rent her clothes, but inflicted many a wound in her tender flesh. When they had finally concluded that they were beyond the reach of pursuit, or that such haste was no longer required, their manner underwent a change, and she noticed, with no little wonder, that they bestowed upon her many little acts of kindness and consideration, seldom exercised toward a prisoner. Little did she surmise its cause, and it was well she was thus happily ignorant, else the little hope she felt at being eventually rescued might have

given place to a torture of mind worse than death at the stake.

Thus far she had been left entirely unbound; yet, the thought of flight never suggested itself, for did she but stir, the watchful eye of some one of her captors was fixed upon her. On the night in question, she had indulged in thoughts of home, and, although well aware that her father and Atwood would at once do all in their power to rescue her, yet, singular as it may seem, her main trust lay in the endeavors which their newly-made friend, the scout, would make. But few were the words she had spoken to the Wampanoags or they to her until this night. Now, however, her guard, who used the English tongue with astonishing fluency for that early period of association between the whites and Indians, was very talkative, and seemed willing to invite an argument. At first her replies were brief, but at last, as he spoke of the evils brought upon his people by the whites, she warmed with the subject and replied at some length.

"Tell me," she asked, "why it is that you carry women and children into captivity, while you generally slay on the spot any man who falls into your hands?"

"No good keep man," he replied. "He no bring more wid him."

"I don't understand what you mean by that remark," she said, after thinking for some time.

"Who he lub most—man or woman?"

"I suppose woman controls most of his affections."

"Dat so. Den he do more for her, eh?"

"I think he would be likely to; but why?"

"Warrior no take man cause no man come look for him," he answered. "Jest good take scalp den as bum-by. If take *squaw*, den know pale-face follow trail, and so get good many scalp!"

"I comprehend you now; but after the woman has accomplished your purpose, what do you do with her?"

"Take her scalp too," was the blunt reply.

"But don't you know that the Great Spirit would be angry and punish you for such an act of cruelty?" she replied, a sensation of fear filling her breast at the Indian's last remark.

"Great Spirit of Injin and Great Spirit of pale-face ain't

'like, don't think 'like. He tell Injin kil' any enemy he take—scalp squaw as well as warriors."

"Then I must believe that, after you have used me in the way you say, I shall be put to death?"

"Don't t'ink so."

"Wherefore?"

"Ask chief; *he* tell. Me don't know much as Modocawan."

"Do you expect that any of my friends are following our trail?"

"Don't know sure, but t'ink not. Too many warriors in woods for dem."

"Then it is true your tribe have commenced war against us?"

"Yes, drike all pale-face ober big water where he come from."

"That you can never do," replied the girl, with spirit. "The land was made alike for all who may choose to make it their dwelling-place."

"Dat way all pale-face talk, but Injin know better. Pale-face show me book. In dat book Great Spirit talk and tell pale-face and Injin lub each udder. If say so, why don't make all red, all white, all one nation? Tell me dat?"

She was about to reply, when she felt some light substance strike her hand. She however paid no attention to it, thinking it was but a falling twig coming from the tree under which she sat, but while answering the question, she was surprised to feel the blow repeated. Being a girl of quick comprehension, and withal of great prudence, she determined to wait once more for its repetition, and carefully to note what it was. This she had not long to do, for she was again hit, and this time on the cheek, while a small piece of bark fell directly in her lap. Continuing her conversation with the Indian, she watched an opportunity, and when his back was turned toward her, held it up to the light. A careless glance and the bark would have been thrown away; but Mary noticed that it had been freshly broken from its parent tree, and a second look revealed the end to have been split as by a knife. In the slit was inserted a small lock of hair which never grew upon an Indian's head. Without a moment's hesitancy—for she felt convinced a friend was near—she raised

her hand, and made a quick motion of recognition, and then set about to devise some plan for inducing the Indian to leave her side.

"Have we far to go to-morrow?" she asked.

"Don't know. Do as chief say."

"How far is your village from here?"

"Take long path, far off—take udder one, get dere soon."

"Then you are making the journey as long as possible?"

"Don't know what chief do; me warrior follow where he go."

"You will start the first thing in the morning?"

"Per'aps yes, per'aps no; t'ink will dough."

"If such is the case, I should like to get as much sleep as I can. I have been too tired to rest well the first part of the evening, but if you will let me I will sleep now."

The Indian uttered a grunt of consent, and rising abruptly, walked toward his companion. Mary also rose, and going toward a large tree, threw herself at its foot, where, wrapping her blanket about her in such a manner as to see and hear all, yet to partially screen her from the Indian's watchful eye, she waited.

Fully half an hour passed without her hearing any sound save the heavy breathing of her slumbering foe, or the suppressed voice of the guards as they would at times address each other. The sudden hope which had animated her was slowly giving place to disappointment, when she was startled by hearing her name whispered almost in her very ear. With a beating heart she quickly asked who spoke, when the well-remembered voice of the scout replied:

"Are you all safe, gal, in health and limb?"

"Yes, yes," she cautiously yet eagerly answered. "Well and strong enough to follow you anywhere, so it takes me home."

"The time ain't quite come yet, kase you see there's too many on 'em here for one man to handle. Keep up a good heart, though, for it won't be long afore you get back to your old father."

"You are not alone?"

"No, I have six of the boys with me."

"And my father—"

"He's tending to things at home, and I'm kinder anxious

to get back, kase I'm kinder thinking they wouldn't have no objections at seein' me."

"And Henry—is he safe in the block-house?"

"He's safe out here in the woods with me. Why, Lord love you, gal, you don't think the boy would stay behind when his sweetheart had been carried off, and the job before him was to bring her back?"

"Where is he? is he near?" she queried, at the same time blushing at her own eagerness.

"He's tending to a job I set him at, and if he does it right it won't be long before you see him. You see I'm going to try and kill off a few of your red friends, but to do it I've got to lead them off, and, as I said, if the boy does his duty there won't none of them show their faces again this side of the spirit land. Jest as soon as we've fixed them we'll make a dash at the rest, and then's the time *you've* got to do something."

"You will find me on the alert, if you will but inform me what I'm to do," she replied, hope once more buoying her spirits up far above her trials.

"That's right," said the scout, with evident satisfaction at her readiness. "When we get back I'll make a noise like a night-hawk, and as soon as you hear it start off into the woods. Don't mind where you go to, kase I'll be on hand and see no harm comes to you."

His voice seemed to grow fainter: there was a slight rustling sound, and almost the next moment a dark form bounded from the thicket close by, knocked down the nearest Indian with the butt of his gun, and then, uttering a yell that at once aroused the sleepers, disappeared in the darkness on the opposite side.

So suddenly had the attack been made that all was instant confusion. Mary had sprung to her feet, and was apparently as much astonished as the rest. It was but a few moments however, before all, save three of their number, bounded away in pursuit. The usual caution manifested by the Indians seemed at this time entirely to desert them. Believing that their prostrate companion had been killed, and of course scalped, they did not pause to consider that more of the enemy might possibly be close at hand, but determining to avenge his death, they dashed on in hot pursuit.

The scout, in starting, did not run with his utmost swiftness; in fact, his way was so choked by the undergrowth that it would have been impossible. Keeping to the north of the path he had followed in coming, he skirted the base of the hill, gaining very little of the ascent, and uttering at times a single whoop to aid his pursuers in following. After continuing this course for some half a mile, he turned quite back on his track, and at length reached the brow of the hill. Here he paused long enough to satisfy himself that his enemy were at his heels, which he readily discovered by the noise they made in forcing a passage through the bushes, when, uttering one long, last, triumphant shout, he called all his powers to his aid, and, as the woods were now more open, sped with lightning swiftness toward the spot where his companions were so eagerly waiting.

There was now no reason to fear that the Indians would miss seeing the fire, as the scout felt satisfied they would keep on until they reached the next rise of ground, from whence it was plainly visible. It was also a satisfaction to him to know that so soon as their attention should be drawn toward it, they would at once halt for a consultation—thus giving him ample time to observe how well every thing had been arranged in obedience to his orders, and also to add a few additional words of caution, and to be present when the final blow was struck.

When he had arrived as near as his own safety would admit, and in plain sight of the ambush, he gave utterance to a low but hearty laugh as he surveyed the scene before him. Natural as life lay the supposed slumbering forms of half a dozen men, their moccasined feet protruding from their blankets, which were wrapped about them, revealing, however, a part of each cap. By the forethought of Atwood, the fire had been built partly of green wood, which had enabled it to burn brightly, and for a long time. The scout now uttered his signal, which being promptly answered, he joined the men. In a few words he narrated what had been done, then ordered them to seek their appointed places. They were individually to select the Indian who stood opposite to each for their aim, and, after firing, which was to be done simultaneously, rush upon the survivors, and engage them in

a hand-to-hand conflict, or use the loaded weapons of those who had fallen.

The reader may not have fully discovered the plan devised by the scout, in having the supposed figures arranged within the hollow instead of upon more level ground. His reasons for so doing were two, viz.: that, first, it gave the disguise a more natural appearance, and, secondly, that although they could be seen from a considerable distance, yet no accurate aim could be taken at them, consequently their foe would be obliged to steal upon them and use either knife, or, what would be more likely, the tomahawk, instead of their guns. This would also give his little band a close range, and as he wished no ball to go wide of its mark, their fire would be effective. Atwood was also careful to have the figures so placed that their heads were toward the ridge of the hollow, and only at such a distance that a blow could be readily given from it without compelling the Indians to step over, and which would have led them, perhaps, had it been otherwise, to seek the thicket where the whites lay hidden—thus giving them a chance to use their guns effectively had the disguised men proved to have been flesh and blood. These apparently trifling circumstances were at once noticed by Peter, and rare though it was for him to compliment any one, no matter what service he had rendered, yet he so far departed from his custom as to speak of these arrangements to the young man in terms of praise.

"Boy," he said, "seeing as you don't know as much as you ought to about Injin fighting and trailing, you fixed them chaps 'bout right."

"I'm glad you approve of them," replied Atwood, modestly "You see you didn't tell me, so I had to contrive for myself."

"There's nothing like head-work to help a man get through this world. If it hadn't been for that my bones would have lay bleaching in the woods long years ago. I don't know but I could make something of you if you'd trail a year or two with me."

"Do you?" was the short answer.

"I made a hunter, and one that's used head-work at that out of an Injin; and if I could do *that*, I reckon I wouldn't

have hard work with you. I guess you wouldn't leave the gal, though, to turn scout—would you?"

"I hardly think I would," replied Atwood, smiling. "May I ask who and where is that Indian you just mentioned?"

"Sartin. His name was Assa, but what's 'come of him is hard telling. It ain't many months since I left him, and he promised to go on the war-path with me, but I waited as long as I could, and then had to start without him. He'll turn up one of these days, if he's 'live and well, I guess."

"I didn't think it possible for you to think much of an Indian, no matter to what tribe he belonged," remarked the young man, apparently with much surprise.

"There's as much difference between red-skins, lad, as between us whites," replied the scout, seeming willing to while away the time that would yet intervene before their enemy showed themselves, yet ever on the alert to what was passing about him, and speaking in a low, cautious tone. "You've seen that chap that I call John? I'd as soon trust an Injin as him, and I don't know but a little sooner. Assa's half white in nature, if he is all red in color; and the man that makes a friend of him don't lose any thing. I never could get him to leave off scalping, though I tried for many a year; he was Injin in that respect, out and out, and it'll cling to him till the day he dies. But down close, and mind your gun, for there comes one of the varmints," he said, hurriedly, as his sharp eye detected a dusky form flitting among the trees.

Atwood instantly crouched low behind his screen, as did the rest. The scout, however, remained standing erect. He had taken care, upon his arrival, to secure a spot where he would be entirely hidden from observation, and through the leaves could aim with deadly effect upon his foe. Not a motion did he make. His muscular hand clutched his rifle with firmer grasp, and the rather pleasing expression which but a moment before rested on his face faded, giving place to that hard, set look which told of vengeance and death to the red-man.

The Indian, after cautiously approaching the edge of the hollow, glanced at the supposed sleepers, and seeing nothing to arouse his suspicions, as slowly retired as he had come. A short time elapsed, when the entire number of his companions

were seen crawling up, each one with tomahawk in hand, there being one appointed for each of their supposed victims. After reaching the edge they halted, and glanced at him who was evidently their leader, as if waiting some further order.

"Now, boy," whispered the scout, hurriedly, "fire when they raise their arms to strike. They'll keep 'em raised a minute to make sure their blow. Now's your time—*fire!*"

Their guns spoke at once. They were followed by many agonizing cries.

"Now out and at the vipers afore they get over their skeer," shouted the guide, springing from his concealment. Throwing himself among the remaining Indians, he dealt death at every blow of his weapon. The little band seconded him with a will. Snatching up the guns of their fallen foe, they soon ended the earthly career of all, save two, who succeeded in making their escape.

"On with your duds, and let's be after them as quick as lightning," was the next order. "We've got to get back to where the gal is as soon as they, kase if we don't we've had all our trouble for nothing."

They required no words to urge them to further exertions, and ere he had ceased speaking they were ready for the chase.

In an astonishing short space of time they reached the neighborhood of the required spot, when, halting, they allowed the scout to advance alone. The fire was still burning brightly, as when he last saw it, but not a single human being was to be seen. He repeatedly uttered the wild cry of the night-hawk, but no answer was vouchsafed him; until, at length, becoming impatient, he walked boldly up and gazed around. His eye eagerly sought the spot where the girl had lain when he last saw her, but the place was deserted. So confident had he been of success, it was hardly possible for him to realize that she was gone; but, alas, such was the case. Entirely regardless of his companions, he allowed them to remain unsummoned, until Atwood, finally becoming alarmed, made his way to where he commanded a view of the place. Standing, leaning upon his long rifle, with his head bent upon his breast, and his eye fixed abstractedly upon the now fast decaying embers, stood their guide. There was something in his attitude and manner to convince the young

and that all was not well. His imagination pictured the lincless form of her he so much loved and hoped so soon to have clasped to his bosom. He could no longer bear the torture of suspense. Pushing away the bushes from before him, he sprung to the side of the scout, who, though sudden as was the movement, still retained his motionless attitude.

"Where is Mary?" shouted the young man, in a voice of anger, after he had looked about and assured himself she was nowhere to be seen.

Apparently not heeding the question, the guide still remained unmoved and deeply engrossed.

"Man," continued Atwood, with increased vehemence, "what has become of the girl? Have you led us on with a false hope, and now, when our object seemed attained, we find ourselves miserably disappointed and deceived?"

"Boy," commenced the scout, speaking with a slow, distinct utterance, different from any Atwood had ever heard him use, "do you think I can tell you how this thing happened? The Great Spirit has taught the deer by its nature to find where's the salt lake, and he's taught us men, both red and white, how to find out some things, but not all. When I was last at this fire, I saw and talked with the gal. You don't think I ain't telling you the truth?"

"I don't know whether you saw her or not, but I suppose I must be compelled to believe you."

"It don't make much difference to me whether you do or not, so long as I know I'm speaking the truth. I don't feel any better 'bout the matter than you do, kase if you think I run my life in danger for the fun of the thing you don't know me. What do you think I started on this trail for," he continued, with more animation, "if it wasn't for the gal? What brings you here arter her if it ain't that you love her, and, by helping to get her back, you please yourself? What good does it do *me*? I'm doing what every man should do for another. No, no; these are war times, and no red-skin is out on the war-path without using his senses. Do you suppose I know what they've thought or done with the gal since I was here afore? It ain't often I hear a man talk to me as *you're* done, and kept quiet, and now, if you think I've done you wrong, or ain't got the good of the gal at heart, why let's

part, for the woods are large enough for us both to hunt for her alone."

"I was wrong. I spoke too hastily, so don't think hard of it," replied Atwood, now heartily sorry for his vehemence; "but you don't know how I love that girl." A great manly tear trickled down his cheek, showing how much he had felt the disappointment. "Here, Peter, take my hand, and let's be friends, for God knows we've enemies enough about us, without making any among our own little party."

"I ain't the man to hold bad feelings with any man 'cept them as was born to be our foes; so say no more 'bout it, lad, and now let's put our heads together, and contrive what's to be done 'bout this matter afore morning breaks. Stir 'round, lads," he continued, addressing the men, "and search every foot of bush and clearing, and if you see any thing worth looking at let's hear 'bout it. I'll take a tramp over to where she was, and mayhaps I'll diskiver a mark that will tell us something."

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

THE numerous duties that devolved upon Mr. Wilber distracted, in a measure, thoughts of his own private grief. It was only in the brief periods of leisure given him that his anxiety for his child became almost too intolerable to bear. Their foe had not, as yet, made any general attack, although numerous shots had been exchanged, but with what effect none were enabled to say. The absence of Mary rested as a cloud upon the spirits of all, more especially the female portion of the community; yet even they had the prudence to refrain from giving utterance to their fears, knowing how much it would tend to increase her parent's unhappiness.

Day succeeded day without bringing the anxiously looked for return of the scout. Those who had seen him but once immediately felt confidence in his courage and skill. Hearing Mr. Wilber speak of him in terms of unqualified praise,

tended probably to increase at once their respect and their dependence on his coöperation.

"If this scout was only here, we might make a sally upon our red friends yonder, who seem to be aware that we have no one among us who fully understands their tricks," remarked one of the villagers, named Nelson, addressing Mr. Wilber, and pointing to where a small party of their enemy had gathered beneath the branches of a large tree that grew upon the skirt of the clearing.

"You speak truly, and it might have a beneficial effect," he replied. "I notice, however, that they manifest no great desire to come within reach of our guns."

"They are a race of cowards, after all," was the reply.

"There I differ with you. Say, if you please, that they are excessively cautious and sagacious, but do not impeach their courage."

"Of what particular tribe is this war-party formed?" asked Nelson.

"I asked that question of the scout, and he, at that time, was not positive in his answer, but supposed it was the Wampanoags."

"They have been remarkably friendly; why this sudden attack has been made, I can't see."

"It's partly owing to the long-entertained feeling of wrong done them by us, in making these shores our home. This is one reason, but I fear there is still another which applies more directly to us."

"Pray, what can that be? Surely we, as a settlement, have always treated them kindly, and I had hoped that, whatever warlike demonstrations they might have seen fit to make upon the neighboring villages, we should be exempt."

"Perhaps the cause may be attributed to me alone, and not to our little community."

Mr. Nelson made no reply, but his look of astonishment and inquiry compelled Mr. Wilber briefly to give a short history of the outlaw's visit, and the refusal given to his demand.

"It would have been well had you spoken of this sooner," remarked his friend, as Mr. Wilber ceased speaking, "for means might have been used to have prevented your daughter's capture. Do you not think, however, now that he

has for the time succeeded in his purpose he will be content?"

"It is quite probable *he* is, but you must remember it would have been impossible for him to have done it alone. The red-man has been for years meditating laying aside the pipe and digging up the hatchet. They are now upon the war-path; scalps are their aim, and scalps they will have. This outlaw has, no doubt, promised if they did his work successfully their reward should be the entire lives of all our number, and the attempt will be made to keep his promise true."

While they were thus conversing, the sun was fast sinking toward the west. The cool breeze of early evening rustled the forest-leaves, and broke into tiny ripples the water of the stream, while it refreshed the crowded inmates of the block-house.

The conversation was continued for some time longer, each of the two men speculating after his own fashion, as to how long the attack would be deferred, and paying little attention to what was passing upon the clearing. They were interrupted at last by the sentinel, who, touching Mr. Wilber's arm, pointed toward the village.

"If you'll take a look yonder," he said, "you'll see one of our red friends trying to get as near us as he can, though he seems as if he didn't care whether we saw him or not."

Both did as requested, and distinctly saw the savage, who moved rapidly from house to house, seeming to wish rather to hide his movements from those behind him, while he courted the observation of those in the block-house.

"When did you first notice him?" asked Mr. Wilber.

"But a few moments ago."

"And was he then coming from the same direction as now?"

"Yes."

"His actions are very strange," remarked Mr. Nelson.

"They are, indeed. Why he wishes to keep concealed from our enemy, one of whom I should say he was, and expose himself to us, I can't for one moment imagine."

"It is without doubt one of their devices, so would it not be advisable to have the men notified in case of a sudden attack?"

"I will act upon your advice, Mr. Nelson. You will please watch him closely until I return," replied Mr. Wilber, as he turned to go below.

The motions of the savage were indeed calculated to create astonishment. He would keep on that side of the buildings where his figure could be distinctly seen by the whites, while it was evident from his movements he wished to keep concealed from their enemy. When it became necessary to cross the open spaces intervening between each house, he would crawl, taking advantage of any rise of ground or obstruction that would effectually conceal his progress. We have stated that the block-house was built upon ground much higher than either the village or the woods beyond, thus obstructing the view either way to or from it.

As Mr. Wilber again reached to the top of the fort, the Indian had reached the house nearest to them. Standing motionless for a moment, he waved his hand as if to attract their attention.

"It is evident he wishes to communicate with us," remarked Nelson. "Shall I answer his signal?"

"You may, but do it cautiously; for, should he prove a friend, as I am now inclined to believe, those on the edge of the woods may notice it as well as himself."

Bringing his left hand upon the muzzle of his piece, Nelson held it a moment, and then brought it over his head, and allowed it to fall to his left side. It was at once answered by the Indian, who turned toward the door of the building that happened to confront him, and opened it wide. He next sprang a few paces rapidly forward, then stopping, extended his gun, its muzzle however, pointing from, while its butt was toward them. Having gone through this much of the pantomime, he again stood motionless waiting an answer.

"There's signs enough," said Nelson.

"Can't you understand their meaning?" asked Wilber

"Not altogether."

"I take it he wishes to join us."

"That must have been the meaning he intended to convey to us in opening that door, and the few steps he made this way."

"It most certainly did, and his pointing the gun was to

convince us that he was a friend and would give us his aid."

"But is it entirely safe? Who can he be?"

"I can not say; but we shall soon know."

"You will admit him?"

"Certainly I shall;" and so saying he made a motion for the Indian to approach, while he hastened below to receive him.

The savage paused as if to gather strength for the run, for it was to be taken with no slight risk, and then sped swiftly over the intervening ground. He had made half the distance when a yell, followed by several reports, showed that the enemy had observed the flying man, and were convinced he was not one of their number, as the difference in the style of dress and paint made the fact very apparent to them. Stopping, the savage brought his gun quickly to an aim, and then, without waiting to see the result of his shot, came on. Having now arrived, the door was opened, and, as he bounded in their midst, it was as quickly closed and fastened. The Indian who had so suddenly appeared among them—from what quarter or with what intentions none could tell—was one of those noble-looking warriors that were long years ago to be met with among the aborigines of this country, but who, now-a-days, are seldom if ever seen, even far from the fast extending borders of civilization. Many members of the surrounding tribes were well known to all present, as they had frequented the village while peace existed, but none remembered having ever seen the savage before then. As soon as he had entered, he leaned upon his rifle, and, after regaining breath, raised his head and glanced his keen eye upon every face.

"Who chief here?" he asked, using such pure English that all remarked it and whispered to each other their astonishment.

"I am," replied Mr. Wilber, stepping toward the Indian, and extending his hand, which was at once warmly grasped.

"Like dat," continued the Indian, his face lighting up with a pleasant smile, although it showed through the ferocity of his war-paint. "Like to see old man chief. Better dar

young warrior. Old man t'ink long while, but t'ink *right*; young man t'ink quick so t'ink wrong; dat bad."

"We are sadly in want of a better leader than I make, and am glad you have come to help us," replied Mr. Wilber.

"No stay long wid pale-face brudder," said the Indian. "No good for Injin to stay in fort."

"I am sorry to hear you speak thus, for I had hoped you could help us to repel the attack which is about to be made upon us."

"Me can't help inside. Injin do more in woods in one day, dan do in block-house in one moon."

"We have a party now in the forest on a most important service, and, although we are satisfied that you would be best suited in the woods, yet we would feel more safe could we prevail on you to stay here, for the present at least."

"You safe here," replied the Indian, sweeping his eye about him upon the logs. "No Injin get in. Keep door shut."

"They might set the building on fire by some means unknown to us, and we might not, until too late, make the discovery."

The savage shook his head, and, going to one of the logs, chipped off a piece of bark. Handing it to Mr. Wilber, he remarked:

"Wood too wet for dat—put fire out fast as light it. Best t'ing for me to go in woods and fight; you stay here. Do more for pale-face brudder in woods dan here."

"Why, then, if you speak of leaving scarcely before you have arrived, did you want to take the risk of the run across the clearing?"

"Come look for friend," was the brief reply.

"Who is this friend?" inquired Wilber, although he at once suspected it was none other than the scout.

"Big warrior—wid voice some times in tice, bush, rock, all over. Injin call him *Single Eye*."

The name of the celebrated scout was so widely spread, that all within hearing of the Indian drew still nearer as he pronounced it. We say that his name was familiar to all, yet few had seen him in person, consequently none had recognized him during the brief time he had been with them.

The name "Single Eye" having been given him by the Indian, few knew the reason of the appellation. The mere fact of the scout having but one eye—which was not in itself a very remarkable matter, when so many of his class bore about them the marks of Indian violence—was not sufficient to fix his identity.

It was also well known that the scout had seldom been seen unless accompanied by an Indian friend, and all felt hopeful, nay, anxious, that the new-comer might prove this friend. The savage was not long in noticing that he had attracted more than usual attention; and the uneasiness he manifested under this close scrutiny showed that he ill-brooked their inquisitive gaze. Uttering a sound expressive of his displeasure, he touched Wilber on the arm, and led the way to a retired corner, where their future conversation could not be heard.

"Too much like squaw," he said, referring to those they had left. "Bad for man want to hear all."

"I don't wonder at their eagerness, for they have all heard of your white friend and yourself," rejoined Mr. Wilber.

"How know who *I* am?"

"I am not sure, but have jumped to the conclusion, from the fact of your following the trail of the scout, that you are his Indian companion. Am I right?"

The Indian bent his head in the affirmative, seeming not to wish to speak further of himself. After a moment he asked:

"When Single Eye go, and where go to?"

A brief history was given of the events already laid before the reader. When Mr. Wilber had ceased speaking, the Indian pondered a little, then shook his head despondingly, as if fearful his white friend had been gone too long to be overtaken. He at length asked:

"Who go wid him?"

"Some half-dozen of our young men."

"Got too many for war-path; make too big trail. Better he wait till Mohigan come, den go and find squaw soon. Pale-face good for block-house, but bad for woods."

"Then you condemn your friend, Single Eye?"

"No, don't nudder" was the quick response. "Single Eye

live in woods since pappoose; so learn like Injin how to do. Wampanoags no like him. Too good eye, if only got one; too good rifle; kill too many deir tribe, so like to get *his* scalp if can, and Mohigan's too, but don't know nuff."

"There is no doubt but he is all you say; still, I think with all your woodcraft, he has been gone too long for you to find him," replied Wilber, yet vainly hoping to persuade the Mohigan to remain with them.

"How t'ink I find where he come to when come here? No tell me where go till I find he gone."

"I am really at loss how you managed it," replied Wilber, somewhat taken aback at this direct question. "You, who are so accustomed to rove the forest, can find out by means I know nothing of, of each other's whereabouts."

"No hard when learns how," replied the Indian, evidently pleased at the other's ignorance. "Hab told Mohigan all you know 'bout Injin taking 'way squaw?" he continued, after pausing to enjoy his satisfaction. "If tell more, p'raps find out more."

"I did not think to mention, that a white man called just before the scout arrived at my house, and made known a rather singular request," said Wilber, who had not mentioned the incident before, thinking it unimportant that the Indian should know of it.

"What he want?"

"He asked me for my daughter, and I refused."

"What he say den?" was quickly inquired.

"He threatened he would have her, but I paid no attention to it."

The Mohigan, without another word, seated himself on one of the projecting logs, and burying his face in his hands, evidently was thinking over what he had just heard. Anxious as Mr. Wilber felt to hear the decision the Indian would, ere long, make, he dared not speak. The picture presented for contemplation in the figure of the thinking savage was one of silent yet commanding beauty. Before him was one of that race, now fast passing away, whom the Creator of the universe had first granted the privilege of roaming the trackless wastes, or of climbing the lofty mountain-sides of the new world. What was it engaged his thoughts? Was it in

plotting to diminish in numbers that race who were increasing with such fearful rapidity to the red-man? Was that Indian now laying some scheme, in which, during the midnight hour, he could unbar the door to their foe without, and invite a scene of carnage, in which manhood and age, youth and beauty, would alike meet the same fate? Far otherwise. He was literally kissing the hand that smote him, and endeavoring to discover in what way it was possible to aid in the rescue of her, who now, perchance, was slumbering beneath the shelter of some Indian's wigwam.

"Know where squaw gone—know where Single Eye is—know all, now," he said, at length, rising from his seat, and speaking with evident satisfaction.

"So you are bound to follow after him, are you?" asked Mr. Wilber.

The Indian nodded.

"Since, then, you are so determined, be it so; but—"

"Why you don't want Injin go? No want him bring back gal?" he asked, interrupting him.

"No, no!" exclaimed Mr. Wilber, quickly, "I can not tell you how much I love the girl, and long to fold her in these arms again; but I must not selfishly think too much of my own trouble, for these people depend upon me for counsel, and I well know how much service you would be to me, could you but remain. Since you will go, however, my earnest prayer is, that you may find the scout and his party, and together accomplish the object in view, if he has not already done so."

The Indian shook his head, as he replied:

"Don't t'ink got her yet; take long time do dat. Wampanoags good Injins for t'ink, and pale-face help 'em."

"It may be so, it may be," returned the old man, dejectedly. "God knows how I suffer on her account. It is a great trial, and hard to be borne, but his will be done. We haven't that trait in our nature, chief, which your people possess, of concealing whatever affects us, whether of joy or grief."

"If Injin lose squaw, or pappoose, or friend, he feel bad as pale-face," replied the Mohigan, for he felt a strong sympathy with the afflicted parent. "But, feel it in his

heart. Don't show it on face. Don't do no good do dat."

"Well, I suppose it don't, in your way of thinking; but we like to see joy or sorrow manifested outwardly," replied Mr Wilber.

"What make difference if cry or don't? If cry, but don't go wid squaw when buried—don't go often to grave after—what good do? Injin don't care what man t'ink, if Great Spirit look at heart, and see dat all right. But no use talk more, for Mohigan start soon on trail."

By this time it had grown quite dark, and the Indian at once set about making preparations to depart. The leather-thongs with which his leggins and moccasins were tied were readjusted, and the edge of both knife and tomahawk sharpened.

As soon as this was done, he requested Wilber to replenish his bullet-pouch and powder-horn; then, reloading his gun with surprising rapidity—for it had remained empty since he had fired it on the clearing—he notified his readiness to depart.

"Me go now," he said, as he walked toward the door "but come back soon. If Injin come, keep door shut, and kill all can. Keep eye open *all time*, but keep mouth shut, and keep in block-house. Good-by."

"Good-by, chief. May you return safe and successful," replied Wilber, as he undid the fastening.

As the Mohigan crossed the threshold, he turned and waved his hand as a parting salute; then, stooping close to the ground, he listened; but hearing nothing to arouse his suspicions, he moved rapidly forward, and disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MOHIGAN ON THE TRAIL.

It was to be remarked, with what comparative ease the Mohigan had arrived at the almost certainty of where, amid the deep labyrinth of the forest, he would be most likely to find either his white friend or the girl. The simple fact, mentioned by Mr. Wilber, of the outlaw's visit and request, convinced him that she had been carried off at the instigation of *that* man; consequently, he felt no concern as to her physical safety. It also assured him that she would be conveyed to their principal village, and, more than likely, by a circuitous route, as her father, being the principal man of the village, they felt assured he would institute a vigorous pursuit. His reason for supposing that their route would be made a long one was twofold: first, that, at best, the village could not be very near; and, knowing that the more direct path would be taken by the numerous war-parties passing to and fro, the band having the girl in charge would be fearful their numbers might increase; consequently, whatever gain they received, or scalps they took, in case their pursuers came up with them, would have to be distributed among a greater number than those actually engaged in the capture.

The undertaking that now lay before him was fraught with danger, both to life and liberty. Speaking the language of the Wampanoags as fluently as he did his own, his intention was to boldly join them, and represent himself as coming from some distant station. Knowing he could not do this if he went into their midst wearing the paint of his nation, he stopped on reaching the stream, and, after much trouble, succeeded in removing it.

He next proceeded to repaint in their color. As it required no glass, he soon accomplished the task. Instead of proceeding boldly on, he used as much caution as hitherto fearful, perhaps, that some signal might have been arranged, and, as he was not in possession of it, its want might frustrate all.

The search was long and arduous before he became aware of his proximity to a body of his foes. As soon, however, as this was apparent, his movements became as silent and careful as the panther's when approaching his prey, and he succeeded in almost gaining their midst before making known his approach.

Rising suddenly to his feet, he made sufficient noise to arouse them, and then, stepping forward and letting his rifle seek the ground, said, calmly, and manifestly with as little concern as if among his own tribe :

"My brother keeps bad watch, that they let me come in among them without hearing the tread of my moccasins."

"He must be a serpent that steals so noiselessly along, for the gentle breeze makes more stir among the new-born leaves than he," replied one of the number, after a searching glance, which led him to believe that Assawamset—for so was he named—was one of their tribe.

"He is known as the Serpent," replied the Mohican, adopting that name for himself, "and knows how to steal upon his enemy, and to strike before they know he is near."

"Our strange brother, no doubt, is a great warrior," remarked another of the band, who was evidently their leader, at the same time stepping forward and offering his hand. "From whence comes he?"

"From toward the rising sun."

"Why did his feet wander so far and alone?" was the next question.

"He was sent to watch the homes of the pale-face, and see whether the path was open for the red-man's torch and knife."

"Who sent him from his wigwam?"

"The great chief of the Wampanoags," replied the Mohican, boldly, not fearing to be discovered in his falsehood.

"Why should he send the Serpent, when his chosen warriors are always near him?" again questioned the leader.

"Do I dwell within the heart of the chief, and can I tel

why he sent me instead of another? If my brother would know, let him ask Modocawan, and he will be answered," replied the Mohigan, with rather more than assumed anger, for the manner of his questioner nettled his proud spirit, although he acted an assumed part.

"Who is the Serpent, and who has heard of him?" continued the other, paying little attention to the answer he received. "What brave deed has he done more than others of his tribe that he should be sent on a path of so much importance? Let my brother speak wise, or we shall know he lies, for we doubt whether the great chief has sent him, when Bough of the Oak would gladly have gone on so long a war-path."

For a moment the Mohigan thought he had been discovered, but a second thought convinced him that such could hardly be the case. The last remark of the savage increased the anger excited by the previous question. With the most perfect self-possession, however, he glanced calmly around the circle of flashing eyes that seemed bent upon reading his very thoughts, and replied:

"Bough of the Oak is a great warrior, and is as strong as the tree he is named after; but he must not speak too loud of himself, for the fierce blasts of winter sometimes break the tough wood, and so might he be broken. The Serpent," he continued, with such cunning speech that he seemed to have borrowed from the nature of the reptile, "is a lowly thing, that creeps along the earth, and hides, lest the great warrior should crush him under his heel, yet no blast can harm him. He has all the cunning of the serpent, but not the forked tongue, so he can not lie. Let my brothers watch me close while I speak. Let them open their ears very wide, and hear what I say, and that I say it right. You have asked me why our chief has sent me so far, and I have answered; but you do not believe my words. What more can I say? Does Bough of the Oak think the heart of the Serpent is turned from the dwellings of his people, and lives in the homes of the pale-face? He must think so, when he says I carry a forked tongue. Does my brother think I forget that once our hunting-grounds extended far under the rising sun, to where the great salt lake washes the shore, and that the pale-face has

driven us from it, and our feet carry us, day by day, far from the graves of our fathers? The pale-face has told the Serpent, when we smoked the pipe with them, that the Great Spirit has made all lands for all men, and that the red-man was as much the owner of the country they came from as the whites. I believe they thought what they said, but I did not believe it. What do my brothers think I answered? I shall tell them, and they can judge whether Bough of the Oak has spoken well, when he told me I lied. I told them the Great Manitou gave his children the land of the setting sun. We never saw the land where the sun rises, and did not want to. If it was rich and beautiful, why did they leave it, and take the land that did not belong to them? If they thought we had as much right to the land they came from, we were willing to give them our share, for we did not want it. We know this country, but not that. We have the rocks, streams, mountains and woods here, but don't know what is there. Here we have lived and hunted with our squaws and pap-pooes an age of moons, but we were never there, and perhaps would die did we go. The Serpent is all red, and would have his brothers as they were long ago, when they never dug up the hatchet against each other. He would like to see the pale-face leave this land forever. I have spoken."

The Mohigan gazed about him as he finished, to note the effect his words produced. There was a hum of satisfaction, which convinced him that his eloquence had taken effect.

"My brother has spoken words that are pleasing to our ears, and we believe what he says. Let him feel no anger at my words, for I did but try him," answered Bough of the Oak, again stepping forward, and offering his hand, which was taken and pressed with all the evidences of sincere friendship.

"'Tis well," replied the Mohigan, softly, though not a muscle of his face betrayed his inward satisfaction. He then asked: "Are there many of our people gathered about this settlement?"

"They are as the leaves of the forest."

"You have not attacked the pale-face yet?"

"We wait until all is ready."

"You have waited long, and may wait yet many a day."

"We shall wait until the Sagamore comes."

The Mohican was at a loss to know who this referred to, but wasting no time in idle conjectures, and hoping to discover in the course of future conversation, he continued:

"A brave tires when he has been a long time on the war-path, and no scalp to reward him. Has my brother none to show the Serpent?"

"We have taken none," was the dejected reply; "but a small party took captive a squaw of the pale-face."

"I do not see her. Has the tomahawk sent her to the happy hunting-grounds?"

"She has been carried to the Sagamore."

"Where is he?" he asked, eagerly, yet without arousing the suspicion of the other.

"Far toward the setting sun. To the home of Modocawan."

"Will my brother tell me the way I can go to get there soon? The chief is waiting the coming of the Serpent, and these are strange woods to me."

He was fearful that the request would not only be refused but ridiculed, for the idea of an Indian asking the way, no matter if he were traveling in a part of the forest in which he had never before ventured, was considered derogatory to his manhood. In this instance, however, his request was granted without comment, and a full description of the course he should pursue marked out.

During the conversation, of which we have only given a part, the night had slowly crept on. One by one the warriors sunk to sleep, leaving the Mohican and Bough of the Oak alone. The former, had not time been so precious with him, would have offered to stand guard, hoping by this to gain some if not all his enemies' scalps. As it was, he could not for one moment think of taking his departure without adding one additional trophy to his belt, and as the man before him had, in the early part of the evening, aroused his displeasure he was determined he should pay the penalty. Forming this determination, he set at once about its accomplishment.

"I must bid my brother good-by," he said, throwing a mournful tone into his voice, as if loth to part, "for the path is long I have to trail. Before I go I would do him a favor for the kindness he has shown to me."

He paused to note how this was received before venturing further.

"Let the Serpent speak," was the response.

"Would Bough of the Oak like to take the first scalp, and make one pale-face less in our land?"

"His knife is sharp, and his arm strong. Let my brother speak low, or some warrior may hear and get it first."

"Let us go a little way into the woods, and I will show you how this can be done;" and stepping forward with his usual noiseless tread, he stopped when arriving at a spot where a break in the trees showed him the dim outline of the block-house. "Do you see yonder fort, where the pale-faces have found shelter?" he asked, turning his face to his companion, who followed behind.

"Yes."

"There is a way to get in there, and to get out safely, if a warrior is only brave and quick to act."

"How?" eagerly exclaimed the savage.

"Let my brother stoop so that branch will not hide his sight, and I will show him how."

The Indian, without a moment's hesitancy, did as requested, while the Mohigan made a motion as if to do likewise.

"Look toward the setting sun, and you will see a cabin close by the fort."

As Bough of the Oak bent still further in his eagerness, he did not observe Assawomset rise to an upright position. His victim caught sight, when too late, of an uplifted arm, but his effort to avoid the blow was of no avail. Quicker than the lightning's flash it descended, and the keen knife cut the thread of life in an instant. To remove the scalp required little time or labor. It was with the utmost difficulty he could refrain from uttering the triumphant cry that struggled for utterance. Pausing to satisfy himself that the noise of the fallen man had failed to rouse the attention of his sleeping tribe, he turned his face toward the distant Indian village, and with as much haste as the darkness would permit, started on his eventful journey.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LOST FOUND.

It was some days after the mysterious disappearance of Mary at the very moment when the scout's party—more particularly himself—were hopeful the hour of her deliverance had arrived. The little band were seated within a thick clump of pine, enjoying the short rest which had been allowed them. Since the night referred to, they had wandered many a mile over mountains and through woods, without finding the least clue to her whereabouts. How or where she went was a profound and provoking mystery. The keen eye and thoughtful brain of the scout had, for once, failed him; his general manner seemed dejected and gloomy. He had kept his band so constantly on the move that they were scarce able to drag themselves along. His hardy frame, however, defied all attacks of weariness. Even the short halt which he found absolutely necessary to grant them now fretted him as much as is the tethered hound when held on the fresh track of the deer.

"Come, boys," he said, rising, "you've had as long a rest as I can afford to give you, and besides, it ain't good to let you sit too long, kase you'll grow stiff like."

"Well, scout, where are you now going to lead us?" demanded Atwood, the evidences of weariness still strong upon him, as he prepared to obey the order.

"It's hard telling till I strike some sort of trail."

"That don't seem likely you'll ever do, if we don't have better luck than we've had for some time back."

"Wal, what then do you want me to do? Didn't we start out to get the gal, and you don't want us to go back without her?"

"I do not; but the fact is, Peter, I'm getting discouraged. I fear we shall never find her."

"Tut, lad, don't do that. Never's a long time, and ain't found on this side the grave," said their guide, earnestly. "I know it's hard on you, these long tramps we've taken, though

I don't feel the worse for it. There's nothing like a man's being brought up to a thing. It ain't 'cording to nater to s'pose you could do as much in the woods as I, though you did think no one could teach you, 'fore I came about and showed you a lesson. This tramp ain't nothing to what that Mohigan friend and me's been on, many a time, and in th winter at that. But let's be moving, lads, let's be moving, for it mayn't be long before we come across something that wi make you forget your tire."

The direction in which they were now traveling led them through a lovely valley, on either side of which rose thickly wooded hills, which offered the best concealment for an ambushed foe who might have noticed their approach. Atwood at once remarked this, and was about informing their guide of the fact, when he seemed to anticipate all.

"This is a nice bit of land, boy," he said, "and it's easy walking, but it ain't safe, seeing the reds have given over smoking their pipes with us whites, and have taken to the hatchet. I'll have to give you a little up-hill work, kase it's better to have sore feet than lose a bit of our ha'r."

"I was about to say that I didn't think it safe to go through this valley. I supposed you had not thought of it or you would have changed our course."

The scout suddenly stopped, and indulged in one of those low, hearty laughs so peculiar to himself, before making any reply.

"I'd take a boy, and, if in one year's teaching he didn't know better than to leave a trail in as broad an opening as this, I'd teach him a lesson with my ramrod he'd remember the rest of his life. You don't s'pose, lad, I've gone stark mad like poor Ruth?"

"No, Peter, but I thought you might for the moment have forgotten in your abstraction."

"It arn't my nater to do that, though, perhaps I was thinking of something else for a minute. But if you're good at keeping out of the openings when you're on trail, see if you'r as good with your eye," he replied, as moving rapidly to a clump of bushes that grew close by, he motioned his followers to do likewise.

As soon as they had gained the shelter, which it hardly

need be said was done quickly—for the actions of the scout indicated that he had discovered something to arouse his suspicions—Atwood parted the leaves and gazed down the valley.

"I see nothing!" he said, after a few moments.

"Take a better look, lad, for you've young eyes and should see sharp," the scout again remarked.

"There is nothing there," was the answer.

"It looks so, boy, don't it?" queried the guide, as he again indulged in his quiet laugh. "It looks all quiet with the sun shining down brightly, and no wind to stir a single leaf? But there's some friends of ours yonder, that wouldn't mind raising our ha'r if they had a chance."

"Injins!" exclaimed several at a breath.

"Yes, boys, there's some of the sarpernts there, but the lad was so busy telling *me* what to do that he didn't see them. It ain't nater though that he should, seeing he warn't brought up in the woods. The Great Spirit's given every man his powers, and he's taught me, boy, to keep my eyes 'bout me while I use my tongue."

"Well, well, Peter, we're not all as perfect as you," answered Atwood, rather nettled; but continuing, good-naturedly "How many did you see?"

"Only two."

"Then where's the use of so much caution, when we outnumber them three to one and over?"

"How many more, for all we know, may be hid in the brush?"

"It's guess-work at best, and there's as likely to be but two as more."

"How do *you* know that?"

"Kase one on 'em was a white man."

"A white man?"

"Sartin, lad, and my old friend, John, at that."

"What brings him in this part of the country? I thought from what you said that if we came across him at all, it would be either at some Indian village, or close round the settlement. I can't see what he's doing here."

"It's kase you ain't been brought up to head-work. It ain't no wonder, lad, it ain't no wonder, seeing as how you've been shut up in a cabin so much of your life," replied his

companion, who never allowed an opportunity to slip without informing Atwood of his lack of forest-training. "It's my opinion you're going to have something to do afore long that will make you as limber as if you'd rested for a month."

The young man was upon the point of giving an angry reply, for it seemed to him that, if danger was near, they should be apprised of it at once, and not to have the moments, now so precious, spent in having his own faults pointed out. The anxious look that rested on their guide's face, together with his general manner, held him silent, for it was evident the moment of action was at hand.

"That white-skinned Injin's on the same trail as we are," he said, "and there's some chance of finding the gal sooner than we thought. Consarn this opening! There arn't so much as a bush or even a little high grass to hide us in getting across; but seeing as how we've *got* to cross, there's no use thinking 'bout it. Jest knock out your priming, boys, and put in a little fresh powder, and see that your balls are down snug, kase there ain't no telling how soon we've got to use 'em. Now, John," he soliloquized, at the same time narrowly inspecting his piece, "it's 'bout sartin you and I's going to meet, and then—wal, it ain't no use saying what will happen, only there won't be that pretty daughter of yours in the way this time, and I'll be taking sight at you over a clean barrel."

Casting his eye over the group to see whether they had executed his orders, he moved forward, and soon gained the woods opposite. Here that anxious expression which had rested on his face for some moments passed, and, pausing until satisfied that they had not been seen, he commenced ascending the side of the hill. Having gained the summit, they found the land descended in a gradual slope, and, being nearly devoid of underbrush, afforded them an extended view. A second halt was again ordered, to enable them to discover whether a sight could be caught of their enemy before venturing further. The attention of the scout was directed to where they would be most likely observed, when the sharp click of a rifle met his ear. Turning, he saw one of the party gazing eagerly in a direction to the left of where they stood, and seeming undecided whether or not to fire at the object that he noticed. With a quick bound, the scout was by his side.

"If you're tired of life jest fire away," he said, as he seized the half-presented gun with violence, "but seeing as how the rest of us ain't, I won't let you. What on 'arth are you going to shoot at?"

"If your eye is as sharp as you brag of, you won't ask if you'll look," replied the man, hotly, for his anger was aroused at the other's seeming rudeness. "I take it an Injin's ar Injin, and it's as good to shoot them one time as another as long as your chance to hit one ain't bad."

The scout made no reply, but following the direction in which the man pointed, the tall figure of an Indian, standing with his back toward them and gazing at some object that in turn had met his sight was noticed. Atwood, together with his companions, were under the belief that their guide had suddenly gone crazy, and, in fact, they had excellent grounds for the opinion. Instead of the grave, thoughtful deportment so usual to the scout, he now capered and laughed like a child when presented with some glittering toy.

"Wal," he said, at length, checking his merriment as suddenly as it had begun, and observing that his unusual conduct required an explanation, "it's jest the best thing we've done yet to come over on this side that opening, for I'd sooner see that red-skin yonder 'bout this time than all the men you've got down in your village. It's all right, now, boys, and it won't be long before we're taking the back track."

"Who is he?" asked Atwood.

"The Mohigan I've been telling you 'bout. Consarn the varmint, it's jest like him, for I might know that he couldn't keep clear of me a long time. Blamed if I don't believe he can smell me a hundred miles. But let's see what kind of a memory he's got! Lay down, boys, so he can't see you, and I'll make a noise jest to see what'll come on't."

Having seen that all were hid, and also concealing himself in such a manner as to watch his friend's movements, he uttered a cry that resembled perfectly the voice of the woodpecker when flying from tree to tree. A slight start was observed, and the savage turned toward them. For a moment he remained standing, then gliding with cautious movements from tree to tree, he came forward. When within a short distance, Peter rose to his feet and extended his hand. The

two greeted each other in silence, but with a sincerity which could not be mistaken.

"I am glad to see you, Single Eye," said the Indian, in his own tongue.

"Not more than I am to see you, Assa, for it's no easy task I've got, and I wished ever since I started that you would follow me up," was the reply, in the same language.

The Indian then briefly narrated how he had traced his friend to the block-house, and there had learned of his being on the trail of the captured girl, together with his movements from that time; to all of which Peter paid marked attention.

As the reader is ignorant of the Mohigan's proceedings on the trail, we may refer to them. Immediately after slaying Bough of the Oak, he had journeyed toward the head-quarters of the chief, carefully avoiding the scattered war-parties that he met during the day, or else passing as one of their tribe. He had nearly reached his destination, and was ruminating as to the plan of action now to be pursued, when, upon descending from the brow of a range of hills which he had followed for miles, to the valley at their base, he struck the trail of two persons that his quick eye told him were females. At once determining to follow, he changed his course. It had led him nearly to the spot where he had been discovered by the scout's party.

"It is the girl we are after!" exclaimed Peter, at its close, losing, when speaking the Indian dialect, that pronunciation so common when using the English tongue. "How far is the trail off, Assa?"

"You can see it from here."

"Were you on it when we saw you?"

"No. The Wampanoags are near, and I was counting them."

"I thought so, Assa. How many do you make?"

The Indian held up his ten fingers, then shutting all again but two, nodded his head.

"Twelve of the serpents!" exclaimed Peter, speaking his own language.

"Pale-face wid 'em," continued the Mohigan, adapting his speech to his friends, that the rest might have the benefit of their conversation.

"Which way were they going?"

"T'ink they try find squaw's track."

"Sartin, that's what they re arter. Were they c'n't?"

"Too far dat-a-way," was the reply, motioning toward the right, "but come back bumby."

"Then we ain't got no time to stop here talking, if we want to keep ahead."

"Don't go yet—wait little bit."

"What's that for?"

"Injin sharp eyes—see in 'dis wood good way."

"That's sartin, Assa, for they are kinder open. But if they get ahead, it'll be kinder bad for us, won't it?"

"No bad," replied the positive Indian; "let 'em go fust now, we go fust in morning."

"I s'pose we can pass them in the dark; but we'll have to wait till daylight before we can see to follow the gal's trail."

There actually was not the least use of the scout's asking this question, for he knew as well how to overcome the difficulties they would be likely to encounter as the Mohigan. It was a habit more than a necessity, asked perhaps to discover the other's plans.

"Squaw try to get to friends in settlement," replied the Indian. "Make straight trail all time. T'ink rest soon as night come, kase tired—know dat by foot-marks."

"Poor gal, she wants rest by this time, and it's a wonder she's traveled as far as she has without breaking down. She's a heap better than you are, boys, arter all."

"Got to walk all time," replied the Indian, gruffly, his tone indicating that no praise was deserved, but taking it as a simple matter of fact. "She t'ink Injin close behind, so dat good to make walk fast. Stop for lay down an' sleep, but can't do dat, for t'ink hear Injin war-whoop, so keep making trail longer all time."

"Wal, red-skin, you're good at head-work, sartin, and it's a pity you ain't white," remarked the scout, much pleased at his friend's answer, knowing how true it was. "It's a pity there ain't no kind of paint I could use that wouldn't wash or wear off, so it would hide that color your mother gave you."

"Assa better stay as Great Spirit made him. He got pale face friend, so dat better dan if both white or both red."

"So it is, come to think. It's kinder mixing the breed, and what you don't know I do; so we get the best out of both nations. But seeing we ain't likely to move afore dark or thereabouts, you'd better take a rest, boys; and you, Assa, jest take a walk round to see where the varmints are."

The band, it need hardly be said, were not long in availing themselves of this privilege, and all soon sunk into slumber leaving the sturdy border man alone on watch.

The sun had set, and darkness began to render objects indistinct even at a short distance. The whole of the surrounding country had formed itself into one shapeless black mass, save where some giant tree or forest summit reared its outline against the heavens, to be traced against the greater light of the sky. The stars soon began to appear, shining out in their placid luster, disseminating that sense of quiet and repose which comes with night. There was something exciting in the scene, quiet as it was. The scout sat patiently waiting the return of the Indian, while around him lay his little company, their heavy breathings alone disturbing the silence, save now and then the faint halloo of some distant Indian calling to his companions. The soft tread of feet was soon heard, and the Mohigan was by the scout's side.

"Wal!" was the single ejaculation of the latter, at the same time arousing Atwood with his foot.

"I have been close to them, and listened to their words."

"I thought you had by the time you were gone. What did you hear?"

"They are looking for the squaw and know that she is close by. One of them is wounded, and he has told the chief who joined them this morning about your being on the trail, and how you lay in ambush and drew them in, killing nearly all their party. The pale-face among them and the chief have had many angry words, and seem ready to use the knife against each other, but I could not hear their speeches."

"That's like John, the consarned, sneaking viper; he couldn't live a month without quarreling with some one, and it's as like as not that he's blaming the chief for not getting the gal sooner. Wal, wal, but it's a pity a man can't be content living with his own color, and doing as they do, but it's the way with some."

"If Single Eye ready, we go," remarked the Indian, ~~and~~ hope of securing a scalp making him wish to lose no further time.

"I'm ready, so push ahead, Assa. But let's see if we can't stumble on the gal first, and then we'll tend to the varmints. Come on, boys, keep up close and step light."

After proceeding some distance he asked:

"There's plenty of them 'bout, ain't there, Mohigan?"

"Was little while 'go, but all come in now."

"There ain't any but what belongs to this band?"

The Indian replied in the negative.

After traveling some four miles they were halted, and given to understand that they were now beyond where their enemy were encamped. Here the savage intimated a wish that Peter, with the rest of the party, should keep on, while he remained to watch the further movements of the Wampanoags. To Atwood this plan seemed good, but not so with their guide, who well knew what Assa's intentions were; and though he might be prudent, yet there was a chance, during the excitement of the moment, when his hopes of achieving a victory over one of their enemies who might wander that way were good, an accident would reveal their presence, and perhaps prolong, if not prevent their ultimate success. The tone of command in which the request was refused surprised the young man, who turned to see what effect it produced, when his astonishment increased on seeing the Indian obey, and follow on without a murmur.

They were now pursuing their way up a dry water-course, directly upon the trail of the girl, although Atwood was, from prudent motives of their guide, unaware of the fact. On either side were rocky cliffs, in many places upward of two hundred feet in height, against whose side the almost noiseless tread of their moccasined feet found an echo. Their progress was rapid, owing to the assurance their guide felt that the girl would continue her present course, hoping, no doubt, that at one time the water had emptied itself into the river Assabet or some of its tributaries, from which point she could better hope to make her way home. There were numerous turns abounding in their path, and as they were rounding one of these, a small fire was observed, gleaming but a short distance

ahead. The scout rightly surmised who had built it, but his habitual caution would not allow him to approach until he had first assured himself that all was well by a personal reconnoiter. Bidding his companions to wait his return, he kept on until reaching a point which afforded him an uninterrupted view. There he paused to enjoy the real feeling of pleasure which filled his soul. Before him was the form of the girl for whose rescue he had worked so long and untiringly. She was alone, and this surprised him, as he expected to have succeeded in getting and carrying with him by force, if persuasion would not do, the outlaw's daughter. He was in no hurry to inform the watcher—if the half-waking, half-sleeping girl could be so called—of her deliverance. This border man, trained as he had been to school his nature from an exhibition of feeling until it had become second-nature with him, experienced at this moment such a degree of joy, so seldom felt, or, if felt, rarely indulged, he could not break the charm until the emotion was satisfied. Giving vent at last to his hearty, silent laugh, he stepped noiselessly forward and reached the girl's side without attracting her attention.

"Wal, little one," he said, "s'pose you wake up a little and take a look. Kinder think you'd 'bout as soon see me at this time as any one else?"

She started at the voice and uttered a slight scream; then, as her eye fell upon the noble figure of the scout, she started to her feet, and with a cry of joy, threw herself without a moment's hesitation upon his breast. Never before had he felt the arm of woman around him, or her heart beating against his own. His actions denoted an ignorance as to how to act or what to say. He remained standing as motionless and upright as a soldier upon drill, until Mary recollected herself, and, blushing slightly at her impulsive action, seized his hand, and strove imperfectly to utter her thanks.

"There, gal, there," he exclaimed, interrupting her; "don't say no more 'bout it, but tell us how on 'arth you managed to give me the slip the night I saw you last?"

"I hardly know myself, for it was done so suddenly that I was entirely taken by surprise. When you left me I waited in hopes of hearing your call at every moment, until sleep stole upon me, and I was aroused by feeling myself dragged

to my feet with violence, and hurried off through the darkness. I had but time to cast a glance at the Indians, when I thought I caught sight of one covered with blood bound through the brush, and saying something to those that had been left to watch me when the pursuit was made after you. He then disappeared again, followed by the rest."

"So the serpents did get ahead of me, though it ain't more than I thought, seeing as how I didn't have no good woodsman to help me. Well, gal, what next?"

"I can not say what way I went, or how far, until the person that was dragging me along came out of the wood into an open space, and I saw, for the first time, it *was* a woman!"

"Sartin; jest as I s'pected. It was Ruth, wasn't it?"

"It was her indeed."

"Has she kept with you ever since?"

"Yes, poor girl, excepting when she raves about her Philip, as she calls him, when she will dart away, and be gone for hours, filling the woods with her wild, heart-broken cries; but she always returns."

"Where is she now?"

"I can not tell you, for she left me suddenly and without a word."

"How long, gal, how long was it?" he asked, hurriedly

"Not more than half an hour before you came."

"You didn't see which way?"

"Yes, and you should have met her, as she went in that direction."

"Was she in one of them fits you tell 'bout, or what started her?"

"Just before nightfall we caught sight of some Indians, and as there was a white man among them I thought they were friends. I was about calling to them, when she again seized my arm, and dragged me to this spot. She seemed much excited, and I was afraid she might do me some harm."

"Not she, poor gal, not she. Thar' ain't a ha'r of your head she would hurt. That white serpent you saw was her father, and she'd 'bout as soon see the hull Injin nation as him. It's easy telling where she's gone to now, poor thing."

"Tell me where?"

"You see there's a cloud 'bout her, but she ain't forgot her father for all that. Nature will act out, and though that white varmint helped make her as she is, she don't forget him, and so she's gone to try and see him."

"Can not we induce her to go with us? Perhaps with care her mind could be restored."

"I'm going to try that thing, and if she won't go by coaxing I'll back her every inch of the road."

"Yes, Peter, she must not be left in the woods, for here she would die; so take her with us if you have to use force."

"I'll do that, gal, sartin; but the thing is to get hold of her. How on 'arth did you make out for something to eat all this time?"

"I can not tell you, for Ruth was the one that provided it."

"What could she find, and she didn't have any thing to kill with?"

"There you are mistaken, for she is fully armed, not only with a rifle, but knife and tomahawk."

Again a shudder ran through the frame of the hardy scout, for well did he know with what intent she had procured the weapons, though he was mystified as to where she had got them. The idea, however, that perhaps, at the present moment, she was endeavoring to accomplish her purpose, made him bring the conversation to an end, to hasten after her.

"We won't say any more 'bout her now, kase I want to get hold of her afore morning, and travel some miles toward the settlement in the bargain. There's plenty of friends close by, and I'll leave some of them with you while I'm gone."

As he finished speaking, he uttered a low whoop. Ere many moments Assa with the rest joined them.

The meeting between Atwood and the maiden partook of naught save friendship, both concealing any outward demonstrations of that pure, strong love which they bore for each other until the moment arrived when no curious eye was upon them. The greeting she received from the rest of the band was equally sincere, for all looked upon her as being rescued from a captivity almost hopeless.

After selecting from the young men those that were to remain, Peter, without further delay, started back, and so eager

was he to reach the designated spot that the intervening distance was soon passed. Arriving, they found that their enemy had selected a level spot on the summit of the cliff, which, at that point, was unusually high. After the scout had, by much exertion, succeeded in bringing his party within sight and easy rifle range, he turned his attention to where his foe was. The savages had not chosen their encampment with that precision common to their race when upon the war-path; neither were they at all watchful, for, to the astonishment of even the scout, they—with the exception of the outlaw and the chief—were lost in slumber. He reconciled this to his mind on the supposition that they felt assured of safety. With so many of their people about, no enemy could possibly approach without their being duly apprised of the fact.

Immediately opposite to where Single Eye stood, the rock reared itself some feet higher than at any other point, and being in such a position that the light of the fire shone well upon it, the shadow of both chief and outlaw were there reflected. From the position of the band, none excepting the scout could see their persons, but the shadows were in full sight, consequently any movement they made was known. From the earnest gestures that each at times employed, Peter's curiosity was so aroused that he determined to hear their conversation. Moving cautiously forward, he succeeded in reaching a spot which with many would have been considered unsafe; then lying down, he set himself to the task of listening.

"There's no use your telling me so, because I know better," were the first words that reached his ear, spoken in the Narraganset or Wampanoag language, and with warmth if not anger.

"Does the Sagamore think I lie?" was the calm reply, yet the spark that burned in the chieftain's eye foretold how little was required to make it burst into the bright flame of ungovernable passion.

"I don't want to say so bluntly, but you have not kept your promise."

"Tell me how?"

"Why have you not given me the girl before this, so that I could have led the tribe against the settlement, and given

them the scaips they want and wait so impatiently for, besides revenging my own wrongs."

"My warriors do not lack a chief to lead them against the home of the pale-faces, and one better than the Sagamore. As to the squaw, I have not had her to give my brother."

"Pshaw! You talk about your warriors' bravery, and here has been a party out for weeks after a single girl, and yet they have not returned. A boy of the pale-faces could teach them."

"My brother forgets," returned the chief, still controlling his temper, and using the friendly term ironically, "that the pale-faces are in pursuit, and have already killed many of my young men."

"It's because, as I say, they don't understand their business, or else it's only a story told by that warrior that came in a day or so ago and showed his wounds, which might have been received from the claws of a bear or the horns of a deer. If it's truth, why didn't they make short work of the settlers, who have no scout with them that understands the woods or Indian fighting?"

"Does my brother forget?"

"What?"

"Single Eye."

The outlaw had indeed forgotten. At the mention of that name he started and glanced about him. The scout, as he saw the movement, muttered:

"Yes, yes, John, you guilty varmint, take a look, but if you did but know that Single Eye's got that one eye of his on you, you wouldn't stand chatting there without shaking some strings out of your leggins. What on 'arth am I waiting for when he's open for a safe shot? But no, no; let them serpents alone, Peter, seeing as they're hissing now, and it won't be long afore they get to biting."

"Well, chief," replied the outlaw, for his fear was but momentary, "suppose he is with them, isn't there warriors among our people that would willingly run the chance of life in a death-struggle with him?"

"You're a-lying, John," again muttered the scout, "seeing there ain't one of your sneaking, pesky tribe, from you down that dare take a hug with me."

"But that isn't what I want," continued the outlaw, "or what I am here for; and as to your telling me that we are on her trail now, and will soon get her, I don't believe it. For the last time I ask you, where's the girl?"

"I have told you all I know," was the calm answer. "If you think I carry a crooked tongue, go look for her yourself. The woods are wide, and her trail is somewhere in them."

"You lie, like the rest of your cursed race!" was the sudden exclamation, as, losing all command of himself, the outlaw stung to the quick at the cool, tantalizing voice of the chief, let his hand fall upon his knife. "You've got a taste after a white wife, and not getting my daughter, because you made her mad, you have got this gal hid until you can put me out of the way yourself, or, as you hope, some white man's bullet will do it for you. Handle your knife and scowl away as much as you please, for I see it's got to come to this, so let it, and the sooner the better, for all I care."

The chief had allowed himself to draw his knife, but evidently upon second thought a better idea suggested itself. The language just addressed to him was an insult as a warrior, a crime as a king; as the latter, it must so be punished. Uttering a call to his followers, he received no reply. Again repeating it, it met with no response. The outlaw uttered a fierce, triumphant laugh, in answer to the inquiring look that rested upon the chieftain's face.

"Call louder, Modocawan, for your braves sleep soundly to-night."

"You have charmed them to this heavy sleep," was the reply, in a voice husky with passion, the bright blade of the Indian's knife flashing in the firelight.

"I own that I did mix something in their food that won't let them wake till morning. Chief," he continued, stepping toward him and drawing his own knife, "to-morrow's sun will shine on one man less in the world. Either you or I, perhaps both, have got to go. I never thought much of you or your nation, and only did seem to be your friend to serve my own ends. Your tribe look on me as a great warrior, and if you were dead I would take your place. This I never cared for, and would have done for you as I always have since first coming among you, if you had not lied to me about

the girl. You say you are a great warrior, and I don't set myself a jot behind you; so, come on, and decide who is best."

It required no second invitation. With the rapidity of thought the savage was upon him, locked in an embrace to terminate only in death. Both went to the ground. Over and over they turned; now one, now the other, having a momentary advantage; both giving and receiving wounds—none, however, so serious as to weaken their exertions.

The band of whites could plainly see, by the shadow on the rock, the fierce combat going on; and, excited though they became, the excellent discipline under which the scout had brought them kept them at their stations. Not so with Assa. The scout was gazing at the scene with a somewhat matter-of-fact eye, and speculating as to who would prove the conqueror, when he heard a rustling near. Quickly turning his head he saw the Mohigan crawling past him.

"No, no, red-skin," he said, placing his iron grasp upon the shoulder of the disappointed man, "let 'em be and have it to themselves. I won't give either a help, nor I won't stop 'em. Wal, wal, but a man's an awful thing at times, when he's showing his hull nater. You've seen bears, Mohigan, fighting many a time, but they ain't nothing to compare with *them* serpents. Yes, they are serpents, sure; hear them hiss, and see them coil about each other. Take care, John," he exclaimed, as the chief made a strike at him; "a few more like that and you'll go to judgment. You're quicker than I thought; and, if it wasn't for that, you'd now be laying on your back, looking up at the tree-tops with eyes that couldn't see. Look, Assa, look at the serpents now; they've got on their knees, and now on their feet!" he exclaimed, as the combatants struggled to their feet, still firmly retaining their grip. "There, John, it's an end with you now, for that knife went in too far not to come out with some of your sinful blood."

It was as the scout said. They had scarcely gained their footing, when the Indian seized an opportunity which accident gave him, and drove his knife into the outlaw's breast. The latter felt he had received his mortal wound, and, dropping his weapon, threw all his remaining strength into a final effort. Lifting the chief entirely off the ground, regardless

of the wounds that were now plentifully given, he staggered to the edge of the cliff, and threw himself over. The friendly branch of a tree extended far enough to enable the Indian to grasp it, and there, in mid-air, they hung—the dying outlaw clinging to the swarthy savage.

The scout had his gun poised, for he felt it would be a mercy to end the scene, when a piercing shriek burst with tartling horror upon his ear, and Ruth rushed toward her father. At that moment the limb broke, and Indian and pale-face journeyed together the spirit-road up to the tribunal of their Maker. For a moment the girl stood gazing down amid the darkness of the abyss below her; then, raising her eyes to heaven, she cried aloud:

“Philip, you are avenged! Meet me, for I am coming to you now.”

She hesitated a moment, as if to breathe a prayer; then—a strong arm seized her waist, and the voice of the scout, husky with emotion, whispered in her ear:

“Not yet, gal, not yet, if Single Eye can step in atween you and death. No, no, pretty one. If there’s two places in the land of spirits, you must go to the better one; and that, they tell me, can’t be if you kill yourself. I don’t know much ’bout these things, though I have talked some with the parsons in the settlement; but I do know, gal, it ain’t right to take your own life. The Great Spirit tells me here,” he continued, touching his breast, and speaking earnestly, “when I’m right; and it’s my opinion some men that think themselves better than I daren’t face their Maker with as clean a heart as I’ve got. Bless me, gal, but you’re mighty heavy for a little one. You’re bearing all your weight, sartin; but, if it’s doing you any good—for you must be tired—keep on, kase there’s an arm ’bout you that your weight can’t break. No? Wal, wal, if she ain’t clean gone, and ain’t heard a word I said. Hope she ain’t started on her father’s trail. But, let’s see, let’s see!”

The scout carried her as gently as an infant toward the fire, where, first giving one of the sleeping Indians a kick, as an experiment to test the outlaw’s words, he set about examining into the state of the girl. She had lost all consciousness after being rescued from her attempt at self-murder, and

lay in his arms like the fair, broken flower she was. Having done all he could without the desired effect, he called his band who still kept their places. Placing Ruth in their charge, he bade them hurry with her to Mary, but on no account to let her escape if they succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. As soon as they had departed, he turned to the Mohigan, and after gazing upon him for a few moments, with an earnest look, said :

"It ain't hard telling, Assa, what you'll be doing afore long with these sarpents, and it ain't no use my trying to stop you, kase it's your nater and teachings. But, you've got to help me bury John ; and mind, he's got to sleep with his scalp on, or you and me are inemies the rest of our lives."

"Assa no take pale-face's scalp ; don't want 'em. Take Injin's dough—chief and all !"

"Wal, wal ; if you've made up your mind to, s'pose you will ; but, let's get John under the ground, for poor Ruth's sake."

The bodies of the outlaw and Indian were found locked in the embrace of death, while the expression of hate still rested upon their stiffened countenances. It was with some difficulty that they could be parted. Both were horribly mangled by the fall. After laying the outlaw in the shallow grave, that had cost much labor in excavating, the honest scout turned away his head while the Mohigan removed the chief's scalp. Accustomed as he was to gaze upon scenes of blood, he had never been able to school himself to this. Both bodies were covered effectually, and left alone in that wild abyss.

As soon as all was finished, the scout started to overtake the party. Reaching them, he found that Ruth had recovered from the swoon, and was perfectly passive. In fact, she was as a little child, as helpless and as willing to be led. Having seen that there was nothing to prevent their immediate continuance of the journey, they started forward at a moderate gait, feeling comparatively safe. The Mohigan, we need hardly add, was not with them, though he overtook them the following day, his belt hung with scalps.

CHAPTER X.

AN EVENTFUL SURPRISE.

WE have called the reader's attention, thus far, to scenes of blood and danger. Let us now introduce them, at the close of our narrative, to a more pleasing picture, and look upon the reinstated happiness, not only of the entire villagers, but more especially to the happiness of those with whom we have to do.

Spring-time long had passed, taking with it its freshest beauties and greenest leaves, leaving in its place the mature verdure of the summer. The full glories of a harvest-moon threw its silvery light upon every object, filling the heart with a quiet contentment and thanksgiving to Him who giveth all things richly. With feelings of gratitude and devout thankfulness for the blessings conferred, Atwood and Mary, now man and wife, sat in the porch of Mr. Wilber's cottage. Near the aged man stood Ruth, still bereft, poor girl, of reason—that gift of God's most gracious bestowment. Lying close by, upon the grass, was to be seen the sturdy form of the scout, and his Mohigan friend, both resting from their last scout far in the Narragansett's country.

"Ruth, my child," said Mr. Wilber, gently, "what engages your thoughts so deeply?"

"I was thinking of Philip," she replied, while a stifled sob struggled for utterance. "Oh, sir, I sometimes wonder when I look up to the heavens, and see the stars shining so brightly, whether Philip does not look at me through them, from his oldest home beyond."

"The spirits of our friends may be allowed to see us, and perhaps, some one of them is sent to watch over our destinies," he replied. "Your Philip, perchance, is always hovering near you, poor girl."

"I think he is; I hope so," was the slow, soft answer.

The conduct of the girl, ever since she witnessed the tragical end of her unnatural father, had undergone a great change. The motive that once had prompted her to revenge had

passed with the tragical death of the chief; her character now partook of the sweet simplicity of a child. At times her reason momentarily regained its throne; then would she ask question after question, to reassure herself of the past, but the cloud would, ere long, again shadow her intellect.

The hour of repose at length arrived. Mary already had retired with Ruth within the house, when the figure of a man was observed making his way toward them from across the clearing. Arriving, he proved to be a young man, whose dress bespoke him to be one familiar in woodcraft. After a somewhat hasty introduction of himself, in the manner of those early times, he said:

"You had a daughter taken captive by the Indians early last spring, I hear. Do you know, sir, whether she met, during her wanderings, a poor captive like herself, called Ruth Seaman?"

"Wal, boy, I reckon on knowing something 'bout *that* gal, myself," interposed the scout, "seeing as how I was the very one that brought her in."

"Do I hear aright? Is she found?"

"Sartin she is; but, friend, what may your name be?"

"Philip Watson."

"PHILIP WATSON!" the scout repeated, in astonishment. "You're sartin you's that chap, with your solid flesh and bones 'bout you; kase, if you ain't, I'd just as leave you hadn't come around, or that I hadn't spoke with you," replied Peter, eyeing the young man earnestly.

Great was Mr. Wilber's astonishment at seeing before him the man they had so long believed to be dead. It was as if the dead had returned to life. Philip was so surprised at his reception, that Mr. Wilber found it necessary briefly to inform him in regard to the melancholy history of the past.

Watson was deeply affected, but he insisted upon seeing her that very night. Accordingly, Ruth, upon some trifling pretext, was brought from her chamber, and asked to enter the sitting-room, where her lover awaited her. As she entered the door, he rose, and, extending his arm, said, gently

"Ruth, darling, do you know me?"

It appeared as if life had left her, so entirely motionless did she stand. At last she made an effort to gain his side,

but her strength failed, and she would have fallen to the floor had not the scout caught her. She was stricken as with a sleep. Day succeeded day, and she still continued to lay in her state of stupor—of half life, half death. Tenderly was she watched by the afflicted Philip, by the scout, by all. Great was their joy, when one fair day the stupor passed perfectly away, leaving her wholly restored in mind, although excessively weak in body.

The crowning event to the happiness of all, at length arrived, and we part with the reader, as our characters are taking leave of the scout. He has bidden them an individual farewell, and now stood upon the grass, in the front of the cabin, to bid them a final adieu.

"Wal, friends, we've got to part some day, so there's no use, as I see, wasting more time 'bout it. If it ain't asking too much, howsomever, I'd jest like one kiss from both you gals, seeing I ain't asked it afore, and if it ain't too much to give an old hunter. Thar, thar," he exclaimed, as they came eagerly forward, and pressed not one, but many upon his scarred and weather-beaten cheek, whispering, at the same time, a "God bless you!" with an earnestness which came from their heart of hearts. "There, gals, run back, and may the Great Spirit bless you, and we'll hope that when death comes, we'll all meet again in the happy hunting-grounds, whar, if there's such a thing as woods or trail, not in the way of follering them up, not to shed blood, but running over them for pleasure, I'll go with you as your scout. Yes, Assa, I'm coming. Wal, folks, you ain't likely to see me again, though there's no telling what may happen; but I don't reckon you'll forget the scout that came down to lend you a helping hand. Good-by to you all."

He turned, and passed rapidly on, the Indian leading the way. As he reached the thicket, he turned for a moment, and waving his cap aloft as a last farewell, stepped into his friend's tracks, and the leaves closed behind upon the form of THE SCOUT.

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